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A new wave of immigration is challenging our assumptions and understanding of immigrant social integration, family organization and well-being, and mobility. Yet, relatively little attention has been given to the development of new conceptual models that are sensitive to the ecologies of today's immigrants who are predominantly people of color. This study extends current theorizing on immigrant adjustment and acculturation by focusing on a set of socio-structural factors that characterize the Mexican immigrant experience and their places of life. Using data from a sub-sample of 433 Mexican-born caregivers in the Project for Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods the study tests an integrated conceptual model that examines the linkages among hardships associated with being an immigrant ethnic minority, parental distress, parenting practices, and adolescent internalizing and externalizing. The study further examines if the hypothesized associations vary by neighborhood social capital, ethnic composition, and neighborhood socio-economic status.

Several important findings emerged from the study. Financial hardship and perceived discrimination were positively associated with parental distress. Furthermore, parental distress mediated the association between family hardship and parental supervision. The study also found that parental supervision was negatively associated with internalizing and externalizing behavior problems. In addition, perceived discrimination by parents was positively associated with adolescent externalizing behavior problems. An examination of the moderating effects of neighborhood social

capital, neighborhood ethnic composition, and neighborhood socio-economic status showed that although a number of path coefficients differ across groups, the general form of the model is the same for each moderating variable. The results of the study suggest the need to extend theorizing on immigrant adjustment by considering the range of hardships that are associated with the immigration process, and examining the opportunities and constraints associated with different places of life. Policy considerations are discussed.

LUGARES DE VIDA: PLACES OF LIFE

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A new wave of immigration that began with reforms in United States (U.S.) immigration laws in the mid-1960s and has continued with the increased transnational exchange of goods, services, capital, and labor is transforming the face and fabric of American society (Suárez-Orozco & Páez, 1998). Today, 12% of the U.S. population is foreign-born and for the first time in the history of the United States the majority of new immigrants come from regions other than Europe and represent racial and ethnic minority groups. For example, whereas about 50% of immigrants admitted to the United States during the 1950s came from Europe, by the year 2000, 51% of immigrants came from Central and Latin America, 26% from Asia, and only 15% came from Europe (Borjas, 1999; Pyke, 2004). Furthermore, researchers predict that by 2040 Latinos and Asians will constitute about 30% of the total population not only as a result of new entries but also because immigrant newcomers tend to be younger and have higher fertility rates than other racial and ethnic groups (Buriel & DeMent, 1997; U.S. Census Bureau, 2008).

The New Immigration: Promise and Challenge

The United States is often referred to as a country of immigrants, but the new wave of immigration seriously challenges the notion of America as a melting pot and a land of opportunity for all. Furthermore, the new wave of immigration is raising general concerns about the increasing proportion of people of color and the economic burden

created by immigrants and their children as evidenced by media reports, position papers, and policy briefs. Regardless of whether one is for or against immigration, the issue is that these demographic shifts have already taken place. And—even if major immigration reforms are introduced in the next ten years—the children of immigrants, and new immigrants will constitute an important segment of the working population in a country whose economy and financial health is based on labor force participation and consumption. In other words, the well-being of current immigrants and their children has important ramifications for the future of American society.

Immigration to the United States has been studied fairly extensively over time and across a number of disciplines including anthropology, demography, sociology, and psychology. There is now a sizeable body of research on demographic trends and their relations to a variety of socio-economic, health, and educational indicators. These studies have generated a wealth of descriptive information on the status and characteristics of the immigrant population but provide limited and fragmented insight into the processes that shape the immigrant experience and support or impede optimal development. For example, many of these studies are data-driven or focus on trends or the associations between certain exogenous or categorical variables (such as country of origin) or other endogenous variables (such as postnatal outcomes or employment indicators), and do not examine the mediating influence of family process. Related to this, many studies examine responses at the group level and do not examine within-group variation. In addition to this descriptive work is a growing body of research informed by assimilation or stress theories on the relations between culture change and family-level outcomes. However,

the basis of these theories—that acculturation and the accompanying distance from the country of origin is associated with improved outcomes for immigrant families and leads to eventual incorporation into the American mainstream—is not consistently upheld by the empirical evidence (Suárez-Orozco & Páez, 1998). For example, immigrant newcomers from regions that have historically been portrayed as underdeveloped fare better (in spite of their relative economic disadvantage) than their native-born counterparts on a range of health and educational indicators, but these gains decline with greater levels of acculturation when measured by length of stay and/or generational status (Grantmakers in Health, 2005; Hernandez, 2004; Portes & Zhou, 1993). Furthermore, this new wave of immigrants of ethnic minority status are not integrating or being integrated into the social, economic, and political institutions of the host country in the same manner or at the same pace as previous or current waves of immigrants from Europe (Borjas, 1999; Massey & Denton, 1993). Finally, much of the research informed by assimilation or stress theory focuses on individual or group characteristics and responses during the immigration and settlement process, and relatively few studies examine the larger social and structural factors that influence immigrant adaptation to life in a new country. Yet, all social experiences take place and are framed by specific conditions in a particular place and time (Portes, 2000; Sampson, Morenoff, & Earls, 1999).

Human development and family studies involves the examination of how individuals change over the life course, the factors that facilitate or hinder development across domains of life, and the manner in which individuals and families structure their lives and relationships in order to meet the demands of their environments and ensure

healthy family functioning (Laosa, 1997; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001). One of the stated purposes of the Department of Human Development and Family Studies at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro is to “generate new knowledge and to foster the well-being of individuals and families in their everyday lives” (see website at URL <http://www.uncg.edu/hdf/about/>). Consistent with this purpose, I argue that our conceptual models of immigrant adaptation in general, and Mexican immigration in particular, can be strengthened by an examination of the unique ecologies and structural conditions that influence this new wave of immigration, the manner in which families organize their lives in response to these conditions, and the pathways that lead to adjustment or maladjustment. Such a focus on the structural conditions has important implications not only for research but also for policy making because it involves a public sphere of life that can be influenced through the development of new policies and/or programs that have relatively large scale (i.e. group) effects, as is the case of housing regulation, labor laws, and policies aimed at reducing discriminatory practices.

Purpose and Specific Aims of the Study

This study focuses on Mexican immigrants who now constitute the largest group of newcomers to the United States (Ramirez & de la Cruz, 2003). Based on existing theories and empirical findings I test a conceptual model that examines how and to what extent financial hardship and challenges associated with being an immigrant ethnic minority, are related to parental distress, parenting practices, and adolescent adjustment. I also examine the moderating effect of neighborhood social context on the hypothesized model. Although the study focuses on parents, I take the view that parenting is not an

abstract exercise and that the structure and practice of parenting have implications for child outcomes across a number of domains including academic achievement, social relations, physical and psychological health, and social and antisocial behavior. The study therefore focuses on parents with adolescents because within many Western cultures adolescence is identified as a developmental stage, which begins with puberty and ends with the transition to adulthood. Thus defined, adolescence is a period during which children begin to examine and define themselves not only based on their family situations and expectations, but also vis-à-vis the world around them including peers, and school. Adolescence is also a time when young people develop a heightened sensitivity to emotions, interactions, and events and the manner in which they resolve the conflicts of the transition have important implications for later social, health, educational, and occupational outcomes (Windle, 2003). This developmental transition can be more or less difficult for adolescents who are born abroad and those in immigrant families because they have to grapple with the sometimes conflicting norms, expectations, identities, and social obligations of their places of origin and their new places of life (Burton, Obeidallah, & Allison, 1996).

The first goal of the study is to test a conceptual model that examines the extent to which the three sources of hardship encountered by first-generation Mexican families as a broad group, are associated with parental distress. These three hardships are financial hardship, difficulties with English, and perceived discrimination. The second goal of the study is to examine the extent to which parents' emotional state mediates the association between family hardship and parenting practices. The final goal of the study is to

examine the moderating effect of neighborhood social context on the hypothesized model. Place is a central theme in this dissertation and it has two meanings. Place is a spatial product of inequality that is manifest through considerable variation in the distribution and quality of resources across neighborhoods. But place is also the social climate and the social character of neighborhoods that is shaped by residents and that provide varying levels of support and structure.

Dissertation Overview

The main premise for the study is that immigration is a social reality that can no longer be relegated to the margins of inquiry, or limited to a few fields of inquiry. And although immigration has received increased attention in the past five years, I argue that the focus and funding for immigration research neither parallels the numbers of people involved, nor the role that the children of immigrants play in American society. The introduction to the dissertation provided an overview of the demographic transformations that are due, in part, to immigration and emphasized the need for cross-disciplinary studies, framed by ecological theories to examine the circumstances, needs, and outcomes of these newcomers to the United States. The study uses data collected for the Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods (PHDCN) in the mid-1990s and chapter two provides an historic overview of the Mexican immigrant experience in Chicago in order to identify the structural factors that create unique ecologies for this group of families and that inform the development of the study's conceptual model. These factors include an ebb and flow of demand for low-skilled workers, a history of group discrimination and residential segregation, and the legal environment of immigration.

Chapter three of the study builds on conclusions from the previous chapter, identifies gaps in current theorizing, and describes a conceptual model that incorporates some unique aspects of the Mexican immigrant experience. The model's central constructs and hypothesized relations are described, and empirical support is given for the hypothesized relations among parental hardships, parenting practices, and adolescent adjustment as well as the moderating influence of neighborhood social capital, ethnic composition, and socio-economic status. Chapter four outlines the methods that were used to test the proposed relations. Specifically, it provides an overview of the research design, study sample, measures, and analytic strategy. Chapter five presents the results of the preliminary analyses as well as the full and two-group models, and summarizes findings from the study. Finally, chapter six interprets the findings in light of evidence and knowledge about the conditions of Mexican immigrants in Chicago in the 1990s, and draws research and policy implications for the present.

CHAPTER II

CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

Researchers such as Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco (2001), Bronfenbrenner (1979), and Elder (1995) remind us that the historical and social characteristics of the host country are factors that shape family life and individual trajectories in general, and the immigrant experience in particular. These characteristics include pre-existing race relations, labor markets and the changing nature of international boundaries, residential settlement patterns, and the legal environment of immigration. As a result, different contexts are associated with different opportunities and constraints for families and children (Alba & Nee, 1997; Reitz, 2002). The experience of Mexicans in the United States and the fates of Mexican-origin families have been influenced not only by the annexation of vast expanses of land (that are now Texas, California, Utah, Arizona, Nevada, and parts of New Mexico, Colorado, and Wyoming) ceded during the Mexican-American War of the mid-1800s, but also by changing labor needs, social sorting processes, and immigration policy (Chávez, 2008).

The Chicago Experience

Chicago is an historical port of entry for immigrants because of its status as a river, rail, road, and air hub and its draw as an historic industrial and manufacturing center. The first immigrants to Chicago were the French in the early 1800s, followed by the Irish, Germans, Swedes, Slavs (including the Polish, Ukrainian, Czech, and

Hungarians), Italians, and Greeks, then by African American migrants and the first wave of Latinos in the 1920s, and more recently by Asians and a new wave of Latinos.

Mexican Immigration to Chicago: Labor Needs and the Politics of Subordination

The importation of Mexican families to Chicago has historically been fueled by the need for temporary, unskilled, low-wage, non-unionized workers and is characterized by researchers such as De Genova (1998) as a history of labor subordination. The first wave of Mexican immigration to Chicago was prompted at the beginning of the century by the railroad and steel industries to meet the demand for temporary, low-paid workers following the enactment of the Chinese and Japanese Worker Exclusion Acts in 1882 and 1907, and a shortage of European workers during World War I. Some Mexican workers were also brought in as strikebreakers for the steel and meatpacking industries in the late 1910s and early 1920s. However, large numbers of Mexican workers and their U.S.-born children in Chicago were deported as unemployment rates soared during the Great Depression that started in the late 1920s and continued through the 1930s (Betancur, 1996; De Genova, 1998; Paral, 2006; Suárez-Orozco, 1998). A second wave of immigration from Mexico took shape between the 1940s and 1960s in response to World War II needs for low-paid workers and the subsequent period of industrial revitalization. Since the 1970s and 1980s Mexican immigration to Chicago has not only continued but also expanded through established family, social, and employer networks. The historical pattern of immigration from Mexico has channeled the stream of new arrivals to particular industries and specific occupations, reflecting a broader racial/ethnic social and cultural hierarchy (Koval & Fidel, 2006) but the post 1980s immigration has presented

new challenges because it is taking place in an economic context where the labor market is much more polarized than the early 20th Century both in terms of the skills required and the wages offered, and new immigrants are entering the lower echelons of this hourglass economy with even fewer chances for upward mobility than before (Portes & Zhou, 1993). Not surprisingly therefore, in 1990 Mexican Americans earned, on average, 40 percent less than native-born White Americans, and compared to other immigrants experienced the lowest gains in income over the 10-year period between the mid 1980s and the mid 1990s (Galster, Metzger, & Waite, 1999; Hernandez, 2004; Hernandez & Charney, 1998; Paral & Norkewic, 2003).

Chicago Neighborhoods: The Products of Social Sorting Processes

Sociologists have used residential patterns as an indicator of social position and mobility and Furstenberg et al. (1999; p. 18) remind us that neighborhoods are not accidents but rather the “products of systematic sorting processes.” Like many large metropolitan cities of its kind, Chicago has a long history of residential segregation by race and ethnicity. Mexican immigrants to Chicago were initially lodged in camps or temporary housing near their places of employment. These initial settlements often served as points of arrival for subsequent waves of immigrants who sought family members, friends, or fellow country-members to connect them to jobs and accommodation, and to ease the transition to the United States. As the numbers of Mexican immigrants grew, they spread into adjacent communities that had been vacated by earlier waves of immigrants from Germany, the former Southern and Eastern European countries, and by ethnic Jews (Betancur, 1996; Vigil, 2002).

However, the pattern of Mexican immigrant settlement and expansion was not only shaped by proximity to work, personal choice, and earning power, but also by discriminatory real estate practices such as exclusionary covenants that barred ethnic and racial minorities from large tracts of land on the south and west sides of the city and that have and continue to affect access to quality housing stock, choice of residential area, and lending (Roediger, 2005) This is why in the mid-1990s, 83% of Chicago's Latinos lived in three sections of the city. First, the original (i.e. 1930s) communities of expansion in the south-central section of the city including community areas such as the Lower West Side (a.k.a. Pilsen neighborhood), and South Lawndale (a.k.a. Little Village) whose eastern border on 26th Street has been renamed Calle Mexico and is marked by an arch with the sign "Bienvenidos a Little Village." In the 1990s residents in both these areas tended to have lower educational levels, experienced high rates of unemployment because of their dependence on manufacturing jobs and companies (such as Zenith Sunbeam, International Harvester Tractor Company, and later Sears Roebuck) that were either closing or relocating to other parts of the city, and lived in substandard and overcrowded housing (Chicago Factbook Consortium, 1995). Second was a mass of land between the southern branch of the Chicago River and the Stevenson Expressway that is adjacent to the freight yards, stockyards, and slaughter houses of the early to mid-1900s including New City, Gage Park, Brighton Park, and West Lawn. In fact New City is the site of the 1905 book entitled 'The Jungle' in which Upton Sinclair described the deplorable work and living conditions of earlier waves of Eastern European immigrants, and that contributed to meat inspection and labor reforms in the early 1900s. Finally were

the areas of immigrant expansion both to the north and south of the city, and that included neighborhoods such as West Town, Humboldt Park, Logan Square, Hermosa, and Belmont Cragin (see Map 1). In all these areas of settlement and expansion, younger Mexican immigrants replaced ageing or outward bound European immigrants who left ahead of the influx of African Americans and non-European newcomers, and they entered neighborhoods where housing construction had stagnated and where the quality of housing, public services, and schools was best described as ‘deteriorating’ (Chicago Factbook Consortium, 1995).

Other racial and ethnic minority groups have experienced similar patterns of segregation, and then and now Chicago’s south and west sides are predominantly Black, and its northern and north-western neighborhoods are predominantly European American, and Latinos have tended to settle in buffer zones or in community areas that are either adjacent to Chicago’s low to middle income African American neighborhoods, or that are transitional because they are positioned between vacant land, abandoned industrial properties, and/or community areas with mixed ethnic group residents (De Genova, 1998; Demissie, 2006; Paral, 2006). For example, Little Village and Pilsen are bounded to the North by the expanding and gentrified University of Illinois campus; to the South by vacant land, the Chicago River, and Stevenson expressway; to the west by now abandoned industrial and railroad sites; and, to the east by Chinatown and the affluent downtown area. These ethnic enclaves (or areas of high Latino concentration) have sometimes served as buffers to the immigrant experience by providing the basic services and commodities of immigrant life (e.g. currency exchanges to facilitate the

transfer of remittances, and grocery stores with ethnic produce). These enclaves support same-ethnic networks and institutions that facilitate socio-cultural continuity and the incorporation of new-arrivals, but also provide varying levels of exposure to the host country (Betancur, 1996).

More important than the issue of racial and ethnic geographic isolation is the fact that—then and now—residential segregation is a manifestation of disparities in neighborhood opportunities and challenges measured as a function of physical infrastructure, and the quality and range of public services. And consistent with Massey and Denton's (1993) observations, ethnic minorities and immigrants in Chicago are over-represented in low to middle-income or mixed-income neighborhoods with inferior infrastructure and services when compared to their European American counterparts. In fact, Sampson and Morenoff (1997) suggest that minority families, regardless of their individual or family economic situation, are likely to live in very different (i.e. less advantaged) neighborhood circumstances than equally situated European American families and that an understanding of these ecological differences is fundamental to an understanding of what communities offer to individuals.

Immigration Reform and Mexican Immigrants in Chicago

Beyond these local dynamics, two federal reforms frame the 1990s immigration experience. The first is the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA), enacted to address illegal immigration by conferring permanent residency to about 3 million undocumented immigrants (a large proportion of whom were Mexican nationals) already in the country while increasing employer sanctions for hiring undocumented immigrants,

and increasing border enforcement to limit new illegal entries (Massey & Capoferro, 2008). This legal reform was followed by the 1990 Immigration Act, which increased the number of employment slots for particular types of skilled labor broadly categorized as special scientists, people with extraordinary ability, outstanding professors and researchers, multinational executives and managers, skilled workers, and high level entrepreneurs, but that limited overall immigration (Suárez-Orozco & Pãez, 1998). The overall effect on immigration from Mexico has been to facilitate immigration based on family reunification, curb employment-based immigration, and stimulate undocumented border crossings for low-skilled workers. Once in the country, low-skilled undocumented workers are more likely to remain in the United States than return to their homes in Mexico and face the risk of another illegal crossing to regain jobs or find new employment (Massey & Capoferro, 2008). An estimated 75 percent of Mexican-origin arrivals to the Chicago metropolitan area in the 1990s were thought to be undocumented and many of these individuals and families lived in constant fear of discovery and deportation (Capps et al., 2004; Paral & Norkewic, 2003). At the same time, the decision to migrate is—in a sense—voluntary, and Buriel and DeMent (1997) suggest that Mexican immigrants to the United States are self-selected and represent a segment of the Mexican population that is highly motivated, somewhat more skilled than those who remain in the home country, and willing to take risks (e.g. by crossing the border with or without papers) and make sacrifices to find work that improves their financial circumstances.

Lessons from the Chicago Experience for the Study of Mexican Immigrant Adjustment

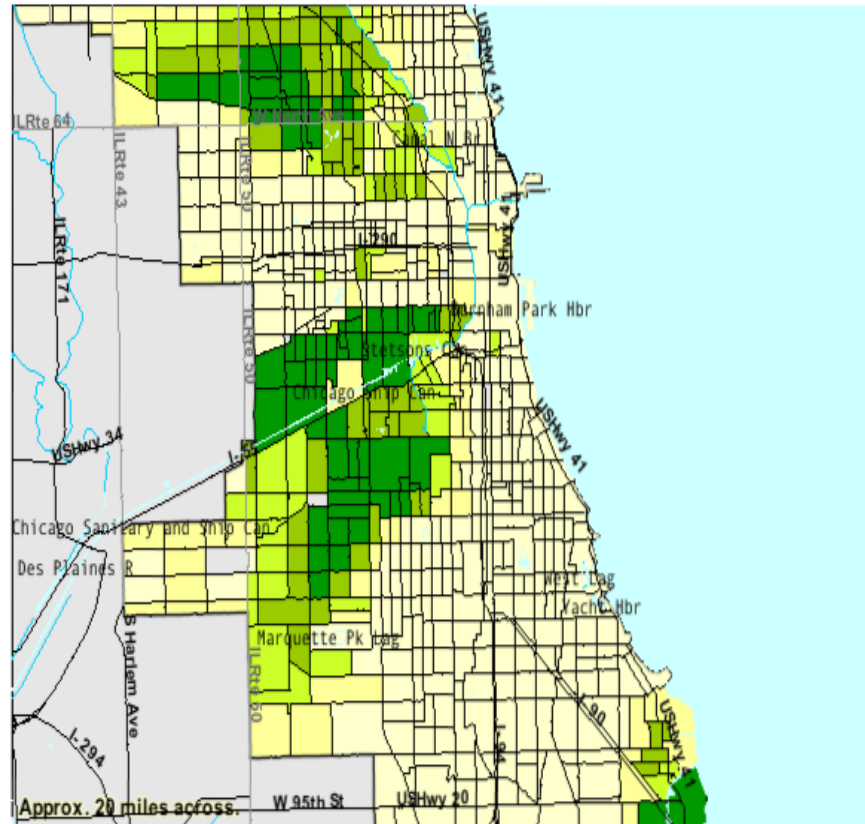
The preceding overview of the Mexican immigrant experience in Chicago highlights the influence of the broader social, economic, and legal context on a particular group of newcomers to the United States, and the manner in which these conditions have placed and maintained them in the lower echelons of the labor market, in segregated neighborhoods, allowed them to participate in sectors of the labor market while maintaining their ineligibility for a range of public programs and benefits. While I draw lessons from the experience of Mexican immigrants as a broadly defined group, I also recognize the tremendous cultural, and socio-economic diversity of the Mexican American population, and the role that individual and family characteristics play in family organization and shaping adult and child outcomes. For example, in the mid-1990s, about 50% of the Mexican-born population of Chicago had less than a 9th grade education, 40% had a high school degree and some additional training, and about 3% had a bachelors degree. A limited amount of diversity was reflected in the labor market where about 45% of Mexican-born immigrants worked in production or transportation, about 40% worked in manufacturing, 7.5% worked in construction, and another 31% worked in so-called white collar jobs including management or professional occupations, sales and service occupations (Paral & Norkewic, 2003).

Reitz (2002) reminds us of the need for theories that do a better job of describing the impact of context (i.e. pre-existing ethnic or race relations, labor markets, government policies or programs, and international boundaries) on immigrants, of articulating the relations among these dimensions, and identifying the processes through which each of

these dimensions influence individual outcomes. Consistent with this idea, I argue that our reading of history, understanding of context, and knowledge of the conditions of cross-national movement should both challenge and inform our conceptual models and empirical investigations of the Mexican immigrant experience, their adjustment in the United States, and the manner in which immigrant children and the children of immigrants find their place in society and reach their optimal developmental outcomes.

This overview of the Mexican immigrant experience suggests that our conceptual models of immigrant adjustment and development should include not only an examination of circumstances and conditions that make their experience similar to ethnic minority groups, but also of social, legal, and motivational factors that make their experience and their perspectives different from native-born minority and majority groups. This issue is further elaborated in the chapter that follows.

Map 1. Latino Immigrant Concentration in Chicago



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990.

CHAPTER III

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The preceding chapter provided an overview of the economic, social, and legal forces that have uniquely shaped the Mexican immigrant experience in Chicago. Consistent with this observation, there is now broad agreement in the field of Human Development and Family Studies on the need for models that are sensitive to family diversity and that focus attention on the interconnections among social, cultural, and environmental factors such as discrimination and place-based socio-economic disadvantage, and that create different ecological conditions for different groups of people. The challenges encountered in research with immigrant families mirror some of the concerns in research with U.S. born ethnic and racial minority families including conceptual biases and a tendency to compare racial and ethnic minority groups without trying to determine what structural, social, and environmental factors explain the observed difference. This is why scholars such as Dilworth-Anderson, Burton, and Johnson (1993), McLoyd (1998, 2006), and Walker (2000) urge researchers to identify the important dimensions of individual and family life and to examine the processes through which ethnic minority and immigrant families adapt to their situations.

The Immigration Process: Challenges to Past Theoretical Lenses

The theoretically driven study of the experience of immigrants has primarily been framed by assimilation theory, and more recently by segmented assimilation theory, to

explain what happens to adults and families after their arrival in a new country, and the manner in which they integrate into the social and economic fabric of society. The basic premise of assimilation theory is that people who come into sustained, first-hand contact with another culture take on the beliefs, values, and practices of the host country and that nearness to the mainstream is associated with socio-cultural integration, better outcomes, and upward mobility both within and across generations.

Segmented assimilation theory goes beyond this earlier framework and recognizes that American culture is plural rather than singular, and that the adaptation of immigrants is influenced not only by the social and economic capital that they bring, but also by their geographic location (e.g. affluent versus non affluent and urban versus rural), the resources and economic opportunities they find and/or create, and the characteristics and composition of the communities in which they live. Segmented assimilation theory further recognizes that people assimilate to varying extents, and to specific sectors of mainstream culture including the home, school, work, and the neighborhood (Pyke, 2004). Therefore, diverse groups in different social, economic, and political contexts develop their own responses to culture change (Heisler, 2000; Hernandez, 2004; Kandula, Kersey, & Lurie, 2004). A central concept in both assimilation and segmented assimilation theory is that the process of culture change creates varying levels of conflict or stress at the individual and group levels (Alba & Nee, 1997; Buriel & DeMent, 1997; Hirschman, 1997; Pyke, 2004).

Assimilation and segmented assimilation theory have been criticized on the grounds that they focus on adult responses to the stress of immigration and the challenge

of acculturation (e.g. changing roles, coping strategies), and do not examine the mediating influence of the family and the effect of family processes on child and adolescent outcomes (Alba & Nee, 1997; Portes & Zhou, 1993). Yet, it is clear that even if immigration results in long-term stress, most parents structure their lives to ensure their well-being and that of their children (Aronowitz, 1984; Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006). In addition, assimilation theory generally ignores the larger socio-structural forces (e.g. the system of social stratification and the range of economic opportunities) that influence the lives of people. However, the experience of immigration differs not only based on individual and group characteristics but also based on the social space, place, and time that they enter (see Wilson & Portes, 1980). For example, today's immigrants who are entering the United States today are entering a legal and economic environment and that is more restrictive and hostile than it was ten years ago, as evidenced by Arizona's recent enactment of the Immigration Law SB 1070 that specifically targets Mexican immigrants.

The overview of the Mexican experience of social integration in Chicago supports the view that immigrant adaptation is non-linear and that higher levels of acculturation do not necessarily result in improved outcomes or greater social mobility for individuals and families. In fact, it is now generally accepted that the straight-line hypothesis only predicts the linguistic assimilation of children (Rumbault, 1997). Additionally, there is growing recognition that certain instrumental competencies or human resources that are valued in the United States such as English language proficiency, high educational achievement, transferable skills, and financial capital, make it easier to navigate

mainstream culture and are more important than acculturation per se. Finally, assimilation and segmented assimilation theory ignore the fact that most voluntary adult immigrants (in contrast to refugees and asylum seekers) move primarily to improve their work and economic opportunities and do not necessarily expect to abandon their cultures, practices, and symbols of origin. Acculturation therefore is not a singular destination or outcome, instead certain aspects of acculturation directly or indirectly influence how, when, and in what manner newcomers to this country are able to interact with and engage their new places of life. I take the position that a focus on *instrumental* adaptation (i.e. those skills and behaviors that facilitate the ability to interact with mainstream culture and resources while reinforcing a sense of self) provides more insight into integration than a focus on *cultural* adaptation.

The life experiences of today's ethnic minority immigrants are both similar to and different from those of U.S.-born ethnic minorities in fundamental ways. They are similar in that today's immigrants of color are embedded in the same social stratification system as other ethnic minorities. It is a system that is based on race/ethnicity, class, and gender that provides unequal access to a quality education, life in a resource-rich neighborhood, a network of influential social relations, and steady living-wage employment. Sociologists do not always agree on the causes of segregation and the economic disparities among different racial groups but I argue that, in part, these differences reflect historical patterns of discrimination at the group level (Borjas, 1999; Charles, 2001; Hirschman & Massey, 2008; Logan, 2002). The life experiences of ethnic minority immigrants are also different from those of U.S.-born ethnic minorities because

of a combination of their foreign-ness and non-citizen status. This is because immigrants do not share the same rights and protections as citizens in terms of access to public services or benefits, protection from prosecution and due process, and the right to challenge unfair practices. In fact, there is a growing underlying sentiment that—sometimes with the exception of children—low-income immigrants from so-called developing countries do not deserve public support or attention (Chafel, 1997; Heclo, 1997). In addition, the road to citizenship can be a long, complex, stressful, and expensive endeavor, which adds an additional layer of instability and insecurity, and makes it difficult for families to plan for the medium to long-term and take charge of their lives, which are two core American values. Long-term uncertainty and marginalization can be a source of stress. This level of uncertainty and isolation is higher for families without documentation and who have few options to regularize their status (Hirschman & Massey, 2008). As a result, many immigrants are invisible, both by choice and circumstance, and devise their own ways to make a living, contribute to their places of life, deal with unexpected events such as loss of employment and illness, and maintain a sense of dignity and human-ness.

The study builds on the aforementioned conceptual gaps and proposes an integrated conceptual model to examine the linkages among hardships associated with being an immigrant, parental distress, parenting practices, and adolescent internalizing and externalizing behavior problems. The study further examines the extent to which certain neighborhood-level influences, in particular neighborhood social capital, neighborhood ethnic composition, and neighborhood socio-economic status (SES)

influence the strength and directional of the hypothesized relations among variables. The two general sets of theories that inform both the development of the conceptual and measurement models, and the interpretation of results are ecological and cultural ecological theories, and family stress theories.

Ecological and Cultural Ecological Theories: Parenting in Context

Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory (1989), and Ogbu (1981) and Garcia Coll et al's (1996) cultural ecological theories recognize the extra-familial contexts that create opportunities and constraints for parents, influence the time, energy, direction, and resources that caregivers devote to their children, and—subsequently—the manner in which families structure and organize their lives within these opportunity structures to ensure child well-being. Bronfenbrenner's (1989) ecological theory focuses attention on the micro-system, or the immediate environments in which children lead much of their lives, and on proximal process, or the regular patterns of interactions that characterize the parent-child relationship and influence child and adolescent development, including expressions of warmth and emotion, and parental supervision of adolescent activity. In adolescence, the family continues to be a central sphere of life and parents play a key role in ensuring their children's health and well-being. Additionally, Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory recognizes the different contexts in which such activity occurs, namely the immediate environments of interpersonal relations and economic activity that influence the structure and pattern of family life such as the conditions associated with different occupations and types of work, and the beliefs, expectations, and behaviors associated with varying levels of socio-economic status; and the historical period under

consideration (see Bronfenbrenner, 1995, 1998). In spite of its attention to the macro-context, Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory does not examine the factors that place families in different ecologies. Yet I argue that contexts of life are not simply the result of personal choice but also the result of structural inequalities in the broader social and cultural environment.

Cultural ecological theory, as described by Ogbu (1981; Ogbu & Simons, 1998) and Garcia Coll et al. (1996) fill this gap by calling *specific* attention to the extra-familial socio-structural forces that place immigrant families in niches or ecologies that are qualitatively different from those of native-born ethnic 'majority' families (an emphasis in Garcia Coll's work), and that shape not only how others frame and react to them, but also how immigrants frame and respond or adapt to their situations (an emphasis in Ogbu's work). These extra-familial socio-cultural forces include the experience of discrimination and/or segregation in terms of employment, place of residence, and language use or proficiency. Cultural ecological theory therefore recognizes that families and individuals develop their own patterns of activity, acquire different sets of instrumental skills to deal with the demands of their situational and social imperatives, and develop collective solutions to shared problems or challenges. In other words, cultural ecological theory invites an examination of the many ways in which individuals and groups structure and pattern their relationships with children in order to ensure their well-being and competent functioning within their spheres of life (Harrison, Wilson, Pine, Chan, & Buriel, 1990).

Family Stress Theories: Family Hardship and Parent Psychological Distress.

Immigration is a transition that involves major social and cultural change, and families that undergo significant change are likely to experience varying levels of stress, loss, socio-cultural dissonance, uncertainty, and marginalization as they discover and come to terms with their new realities (Nann, 1982; Rogler, Cortes, & Malgady, 1991). Family stress theories draw attention to the number and nature of challenges that immigrant families experience in their everyday lives, which for immigrants includes difficulties being understood or engaging in English, particularly with people in formal social institutions (e.g. potential and actual employers, schools, rental and utility companies, doctors) who may be not used to—or tolerant of—foreign accents or hesitant speech. Immigration can also create financial tensions for families who arrive with little or no dollar savings, come with skills that are not easily transferable (e.g. degrees earned in a completely different educational system), earn low wages and do not know how to negotiate compensation packages, and have to navigate an economic system where goods and services are provided at a cost and are therefore inaccessible to those who cannot pay either in cash or with credit. Other everyday challenges faced by immigrants are tensions associated with reconstituting a social base, feelings of not belonging, differences in expectations and social norms, and difficulties associated with understanding ones place in a new social order largely defined by race, financial status, and educational level (Balls Organista, Organista, & Kurasaki, 2003; Berry, 2003; Hovey, 2000). According to family stress theories, these challenges create new pressures on the family and disturb the normal structure and process of everyday life. However,

families come with different expectations, characteristics, resources, and experiences, and the manner in which they perceive these hardships and interpret their situations influences how they cope (White & Klein, 2002). Therefore, family stress theory posits that family hardship and parenting practices are mediated by parental psychological distress (White, Roosa, Weaver & Nair, 2009).

Integrative Conceptual Model: Linkages Among External Hardship,
Parenting Practices, and Adolescent Adjustment

Figure 1 illustrates a conceptual model developed to examine the linkages among hardships associated with Mexican immigrant status, parenting practices, and adolescent adjustment measured as a function of internalizing and externalizing problems. Drawing on the historical evidence summarized in Chapter II, and consistent with Ogbu (1981) and Garcia Coll's et al. (1996) ecological models this study examines three ways in which social position based on Hispanic ethnicity and foreign-born status creates hardships for Mexican-origin families, these include financial hardship and perceived discrimination resulting from low-wages, inequalities in the labor market, and residential segregation; and difficulties with English and therefore challenges communicating with people at work and in formal mainstream institutions. Drawing on Bronfenbrenner's (1994) ecological theory the study further examines the associations between parenting practices and adolescent adjustment. The study also draws on several family stress models to examine how and to what extent the hardships associated with settling in the United States influence parental psychological distress, and parenting practices. Finally, and consistent with Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory (1998), and Garcia Coll et al's

(1996) theory the study examines how and to what extent neighborhood social factors moderate the proposed relations. Each of the variables in the model is described, and the theoretical and empirical literature are reviewed.

Model Constructs and Literature Review

The hypothesized model examines the linkages among family hardships associated with being a Mexican-born immigrant, the context and character of parenting, and adolescent adjustment.

Family Hardship

As indicated in previous chapters, immigrants face a number of hardships as they adjust to life in a new country and settle into a new social structure, and these hardships create varying levels of emotional or psychological distress. Most of the studies reviewed either examine stress or hardships associated with individual or family efforts to assimilate or they focused on financial loss or strain, and there is little empirical work that examines both sources of hardship concurrently, or that examines the linkages between the hardships created by financial and socio-structural inequalities, parenting, and adolescent outcomes in Mexican-immigrant families (Portes, 2000). This study extends theorizing by focusing on multiple stressors associated with the Mexican immigrant experience specifically, financial hardship, difficulties with English, and perceived discrimination (Chun & Akutsu, 2003; White et al., 2009).

Financial hardship. Most immigrant families come to the United States in search of a better life through gainful employment, but their ability to meet financial goals and expectations, and to sustain themselves and their families depends not only on personal

characteristics such educational level, skill sets, and financial capital, but also on extra-familial influences such as access to information, openness of the labor market, and the climate of reception of the host country which includes public attitudes about competition for jobs and preconceptions about the deservingness of different groups of people (Vega, Kolody, & Valle, 1987). As indicated in Chapter two of this study, the structure of the U.S. labor market has channeled and maintained Mexican immigrants in low-skilled, low-wage jobs such that they are disproportionately represented among the poor.

Household income and poverty status are commonly used indicators of financial hardship and studies with the general population show a clear link between poverty and a number of indices of child and family well-being (Duncan, Brooks-Gunn, & Klebanov, 1994; McLoyd, 1990, 1998). This study uses the income-to-need ratio as an objective measure of financial hardship. The income-to-need ratio is adjusted for family size and indicates a family's relative position to the poverty threshold. An income-to-need ratio of 1 indicates that household income is at the poverty threshold, smaller values represent higher levels of poverty, while larger values represent greater affluence.

Difficulties with English. The United States is often referred to as a country of immigrants, yet English—the cultural symbol of the class with power—remains the sole official language. In spite of federal regulations which require (under Title VI of the 1965 Civil Rights Act) federally funded health care providers to offer language assistance to clients who are not proficient in English, and a parallel move in some states to translate important public service information, English continues to be the language of the mainstream (Moua, Guerra, Moore, & Valdiserri, 2002). This means that newcomers to

the United States are expected to become proficient in English, and limited provision is made to incorporate their languages or cultures into the mainstream American landscape. Adults who feel they do not speak English well may find it difficult to interact with American employers, seek resources and opportunities beyond their immediate environments, or interact with professionals (such as doctors and teachers) when needed. For this reason, English language proficiency is used as an indicator of social hardship (De Genova, 1998; Hovey, 2000). In this study, difficulties with English is a measure of the extent to which participants feel that their English language skills impede their ability to get along with others or advance at work or at school.

Perceived discrimination. Not only are Mexican immigrants segregated within the labor force, but they are also seen as unwelcome competitors for low-skilled employment. And Mexican-origin families—who are easily identifiable on the basis of their skin tone, language, culture, and whose legal status is questioned—are subject to higher levels of surveillance and have higher arrest rates for *minor* offenses compared to other minority groups (De Genova, 1998; Portes, 2000). While discriminatory practices are applied to groups, individuals within these groups interpret and respond to their situations in different ways and this study examines perceived discrimination as a third indicator of migration-related hardship (Murry et al., 2001). In this study perceived discrimination is a measure of the extent to which respondents feel that they or their friends have been unfairly treated because of their race or ethnicity.

The Context and Content of Parenting

Consistent with ecological and cultural ecological theories, a central theme in this study is that families are the primary context in which external social and economic demands are received, interpreted, and acted upon, and in which children are nurtured and raised. For immigrants in particular, the family provides continuity in relationships, norms, and values in spite of major extra-familial social and cultural change, which includes moving to a place of residence, meeting and interacting with new sets of people, learning new cultural codes and expectations, and meeting new financial demands (Berry et al., 2006; Foner, 1997). Building on family stress theory the study examines the extent to which family hardship create psychological distress and are associated with parenting practices.

Parental distress. Parental distress refers to caregiver cognitive, behavioral, and affective functioning, and includes feelings of anxiety, depression and changes in emotion that negatively impact everyday life and the ability to parent. Parents who become distressed because of economic hardship, linguistic isolation, or perceived discrimination might feel angry and irritable, unable to control their lives, and might distance themselves from others or have fewer and less positive interactions with family. In this study parental distress is a measure of the extent to which parents suffer from depression, anxiety, or have emotional problems that interfere with work and family life.

Parental supervision. Parental supervision involves keeping track of children's activities and social relations, and the strategies that parents use to monitor and protect their children while encouraging them to interact with the world around them (Bradley,

2002). Parenting practices mediate the relation between parental psychological distress and adolescent adjustment (Conger et al., 1984; Mistry, Vandewater, Huston, & McLoyd, 2002). For the purposes of this study parental supervision is a measure of the extent to which parents structure and monitor their children's activity, and establish and enforce rules for appropriate behavior.

Adolescent Adjustment

Adolescence is an important developmental transition that can be more or less difficult for immigrant children who face the unique task of developing social, behavioral and emotional competencies in two cultural settings with sometimes non-overlapping and competing norms and expectations: the home and the outside world (see Gonzales, Knight, Morgan-Lopez, Saenz, & Sirotli, 2002). Irrespective of context, the changes that take place during adolescence have a profound impact on later outcomes and development (Maccoby & Martin, 1983).

There is conflicting evidence on the extent to which children of immigrants exhibit higher or lower rates of behavioral problems compared to the children of native-born parents (see Aronowitz, 1984; Short & Johnson, 1997). Recent studies have found higher levels of depressive symptoms among Mexican youth compared to other ethnic or racial minority youth, but these findings further suggest that they are at greater risk of mental health problems because of their socio-economic disadvantage and their experience of discrimination and segregation (Hill, Bush, & Roosa, 2003; Polo & López, 2009; Roberts & Chen, 1995; Roberts & Sobhan, 1992; Wright et al., 2005). Two widely

used indicators of adolescent success are the lack of internalizing and externalizing problems (Aber, Gephart, Brooks-Gunn, & Connell, 1997).

Internalizing behavior problems are a group of behaviors that are primarily expressed as ‘internal’ including psychological problems related to emotional problems including fear, anxiety, and depression. Adolescent internalizing behavior problems are associated with social anxiety and lowered levels of self-esteem and depression later in life. *Externalizing behavior problems* are a group of behavior problems that children and adolescents exhibit through their interactions with their external social world and include aggression, delinquency, and other socially disruptive behaviors (Windle, 2003).

Adolescent externalizing behavior is a risk factor for juvenile delinquency and adult violence (Rutter, Champion, Quinton, Maughan, & Pickles, 1995).

Direct and Indirect Relations

There is a large, and growing, body of research on the direct and indirect effects of different forms of hardship on adolescent adjustment through the influence of parental distress and parenting practices (Conger et al. 2002; Gutman, McLoyd, & Toyokawa, 2005; Mistry, Vandewater, Huston, & McLoyd, 2002; Parke et al., 2004). Evidence for direct effects suggests that economic hardship is associated with child cognitive and emotional development (Duncan & Brooks-Gunn, 1994; McLoyd, 1998). Evidence for indirect effects comes from studies guided by the family stress theory that used relatively large samples and that have been replicated across urban and rural settings and across ethnic groups (Conger, Reuter, & Elder, 1999). These studies show that family hardship and economic pressure create feelings of anxiety, anger, depression, and withdrawal in

parents. Prior studies with European American families (Conger et al., 1994) and African American families (Brody et al., 1994) support the link between economic pressure and depression. Some support for this association has been found for Mexican American mothers (Dennis, Parke, Coltrane, Blasher, & Borthwick-Duffy, 2003).

Studies on immigrant assimilation have consistently found a negative association between English-language proficiency and anxiety and depression not only among refugees but also Latino immigrant families (Marin, Balls Organista, & Chun, 2003). More recently Gonzales et al. (2002) found a relation between acculturative stressors, including difficulties with English and parental psychological health. Similarly a study by White et al. (2009) with a sample of Mexican American mothers and fathers found a positive association between English language pressure and maternal depression, but not paternal depression. Furthermore, maternal depression mediated the association between language difficulties and maternal warmth.

Finally, while there is a large body of work on the effects of racism on African American families, relatively little continues to be known about the linkages between racial or ethnic discrimination and Mexican American family well-being. For example, in a comparative study of European American and African American men and women, Kreiger and Sidney (1996) found that African Americans who reported and accepted racial discrimination at work, in their interactions with service agencies, and in public had higher levels of stress measured as a function of their blood pressure than their European American counterparts. In another study, Murry et al. (2001) found that higher levels of perceived discrimination amplified the effects of hardship pileup on

psychological functioning and parent—child relationships in a sample of urban and rural families in Georgia and Iowa. There is some support for this association among Mexican families. In particular, Vega, Kolody, and Valle (1987) found a positive association between the stress associated with building a new base of social support and expectations for financial self-sufficiency, perceptions of unfair treatment and psychological distress in a sample of first generation Mexican American parents. Finch et al (2000) found a direct association between perceived discrimination and depression. They also found that Mexican-born participants were more likely to perceive discrimination than their native-born counterparts. In addition Mexican-born participants felt more discriminated against over time suggesting either a greater awareness or a greater expectation of unequal treatment. Similarly, Crouter, Davis, Updegraff, Delgado, and Fortner (2006) found that perceived racism by fathers was associated with family member's depressive symptoms, particularly when mothers were more acculturated.

Empirical support for the relation between parental distress and parenting practices comes from the Iowa Youth and Families Project with rural European American families and has been replicated in studies of urban populations, single and two-parent families, African American and more recently Mexican American families. Collectively, these studies find that maternal depression is associated with harsh disciplinary practices, lower warmth, and more inconsistent monitoring (Conger, Ge, Elder, Lorenz, & Simons, 1984; Conger et al., 2002; Gutman, McLoyd, & Toyokawa, 2005; Le, Ceballo, Chao, Hill, Murry, & Pinderhughes, 2009; McLoyd, 1990; Parke et al., 2004). Although most studies have focused on maternal depression, both the initial work by Conger, McCarty,

Yang, Lahey and Kropp (1984) and more recent work (Conger et al., 1992) provide evidence for the relationship between economic hardship and paternal depression, and paternal distress, and changes in parenting practices (Parke et al, 2004). To my knowledge, only one study by White et al. (2009) examined the influence of contextual factors on parental distress and parenting in Mexican families, and they found a positive association between parental distress and economic and neighborhood stressors.

During adolescence, parental management practices are associated with social competence and social behavior (Patterson & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1982). However, parental supervision techniques are best understood in light of parental assessments about the contexts in which their children lead their lives (e.g. school, neighborhood, friends) and the opportunities and dangers they present, as well as parental assessments about their own parenting efficacy and the support (either public or private) upon which they can draw (Bradley, 2002; Dishion & McMahon, 1998). For example, research with families in disadvantaged neighborhoods shows that high levels of monitoring are associated with prosocial adolescent behavior, and that these results are consistent across family socio-economic status and ethnic group affiliation (Patterson & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1982; Barber, Olsen, & Shagle; 1994). There is some support for these associations among Mexican-origin families. For example, a recent study using a small sample of Mexican American adolescents living in a large metropolitan area supports the association between supportive parenting (i.e. monitoring and absence of harsh discipline) and lower levels of externalizing behaviors among girls, but not boys. Furthermore, harsh parenting (i.e. youth reports of firm control and inconsistent

discipline) was associated with higher levels of internalizing problems for boys (Manongdo, & Ramirez-Garcia, 2007). Similarly, Forehand, Miller, Dutra, Watts, and Chance (1997) found that higher levels of monitoring were associated with fewer behavior problems in a sample of Hispanic and African American adolescents. The present study will therefore test the robustness of the above findings with a sample of Mexican-origin families.

Moderating Variables

Neighborhoods are geographic spaces within which individuals, families, and larger social groups organize their lives, and for many immigrants, neighborhoods also represent spaces in which instrumental social relations are re-built, shared norms are bolstered or redefined, and basic needs and commodities (such as employment, goods, and services) are negotiated. This study examines three dimensions of neighborhood social context that are salient to the Mexican immigrant experience in Chicago namely, social capital, ethnic composition, and neighborhood socio-economic status. Although the variables are examined separately because of sample size constraints, it is evident that ethnic concentration and neighborhood SES, in particular, are intrinsically inter-related.

Social capital. The study draws on the work of Coleman (1988) on the structure of social relations that facilitates action within the group. Using Portes' (2000) framework, social capital represents the collective resources and shared norms generated at the group or community level by nonfamily networks upon which individuals and families can draw to meet their goals. This framework assumes that social capital is

value-free and can promote or sustain behaviors and expectations that are part of, or separate from, the mainstream (Furstenberg, 2005; Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000).

Ethnic composition is a measure of the extent to which immigrant families from Mexico are represented in neighborhoods at levels at or above their numbers in the general population, and in this study ethnic composition is used as a proxy for ethnic exposure and interaction. However, and as indicated in Chapter two of the dissertation, ethnic composition is not only the result of individual choice and collective efforts at building or re-building community, but is also the product of cultural labeling, discrimination, and segregation (Anderson & Massey, 2001). Therefore, neighborhoods with high levels of same ethnic minority or immigrant families also tend to be neighborhoods with lower neighborhood SES, and fewer and poorer quality public resources.

Direct and indirect evidence for the influence of social capital, ethnic composition, and neighborhood socio-economic status comes from the literature on poverty and immigrant assimilation. Sociologists discuss the role of social capital and ethnic enclaves in facilitating the formation of networks of solidarity that attenuate the social and emotional costs of immigration (Alba & Nee, 1997; Portes & Sensenbrenner, 1993; Portes & Zhou, 1993; Sanders, 2002; Sanders & Nee, 1987). For example, there is a large and growing literature on the role of social capital in the creation of neighborhood networks that monitor and limit non-sanctioned adult and child activity, and uphold the interests of the collective (Alba & Nee, 1997; Heisler, 2000). High levels of capital can be a source of support, particularly for newcomers who are exploited and marginalized

from mainstream society but seek to find groups where they are accepted and integrated (Portes & Sensenbrenner, 1993; Zhou, 1999).

Furthermore, high or low ethnic concentration fundamentally changes the nature of relations among neighborhood social processes, family management strategies, and adolescent adjustment. For example, immigrants in neighborhoods with high concentrations of Mexican families have same-ethnic support networks that facilitate sharing and caring than immigrants in neighborhoods with low to moderate concentrations of same-ethnic families. In addition, immigrants in neighborhoods with people who mirror the values and practices of the home country will experience more affirmation and fewer challenges to their identities and practices compared to immigrants in neighborhoods with low concentrations of same-ethnic families (see Portes and Sensenbrenner, 1993). Finally, in their review of the literature, Sampson, Morenoff, and Gannon-Rowley (2002) conclude that neighborhoods with concentrated affluence promote a sense of shared responsibility and shared expectations for collective action, whereas concentrated disadvantage (i.e. low-SES) tends to depress feelings of mutual trust and shared expectations for children.

Although there is a sizeable body of work on the creation and role of social capital, ethnic concentration (or composition), and neighborhood socio-economic status and the mechanisms through which they impact economic, social, and cultural integration and mobility, I did not find any studies that directly examine the moderating effects of different levels of neighborhood social context on immigrant family process. Instead, the studies reviewed either examined the direct and indirect effects of neighborhood social

context using individual-level assessments, or the associations between neighborhood measures of social context and specific outcomes.

Hypotheses

The present study draws on cultural ecological theory to build on and extend existing theorizing and research based on family stress theory by identifying sources of stress that are directly related to the experience of many low-skilled Mexican-born adults who come to the United States to work and care for themselves and their families. These sources of stress include the ability to secure an income that exceeds family needs, the ability to communicate with native-born persons in mainstream institutions, and perceptions about unfair treatment based on race or ethnicity. The study further builds on family stress theory, and research framed by Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory and Garcia-Coll's cultural ecological theory to examine the associations among family hardships, family context and process and adolescent adjustment. The hypotheses presented below highlight the associations among financial hardship, difficulties with English, perceived discrimination, parental distress, parenting practices, and adolescent outcomes, and the moderating effect of neighborhood social context on these associations.

Hypothesis 1

Immigration-related stressors are related to parenting practices through their effect on psychological distress. Specifically, (1) financial hardship is related to psychological distress and the association is positive, (2) difficulty with English is related to parental distress and the association is positive, (3) perceived discrimination is

associated with parental distress and the association is positive, (4) parental distress is associated with parental supervision and the association is negative. In other words, the more immigrant parents experience financial hardship, have difficulties with English, or feel that they are discriminated against, the more they experience anxiety or distress. Parents who experience higher levels of distress also provide less supervision for their adolescent children.

Hypothesis 2

Parental distress mediates the association between family hardship and parental supervision. In other words, family hardship influences the extent to which parents supervise their adolescents through its effect on parental psychological distress.

Hypothesis 3

Parental supervision is associated with adolescent internalizing and externalizing behavior problems, and the association is negative. In other words, parents who use higher levels of supervision report fewer adolescent internalizing and externalizing behavior problems.

Moderating Hypotheses

The effect of family hardship on parental distress varies depending on whether families live in neighborhoods with below or above average capital. Specifically, families in neighborhoods with high social capital will have access to more resources and supports that mitigate the effect of financial hardship, difficulty with English, and perceived discrimination. In contrast, the effect of family hardship on parental distress is magnified

for families in neighborhoods with low social capital and who are more dependent on the family unit to resolve and deal with hardship.

The effects of difficulties with English and perceived discrimination on parental distress varies depending on the ethnic composition of the neighborhood. The effect of perceived discrimination and difficulties with on parental distress will be attenuated for families in Latino neighborhoods who are in regular contact with same-ethnic residents and therefore do not experience regular discrimination based on race or ethnicity and are not challenged based on their ability to speak English. In contrast, families in other-ethnic mix neighborhoods are more likely to experience stress associated with discrimination and a perceived inability to communicate effectively.

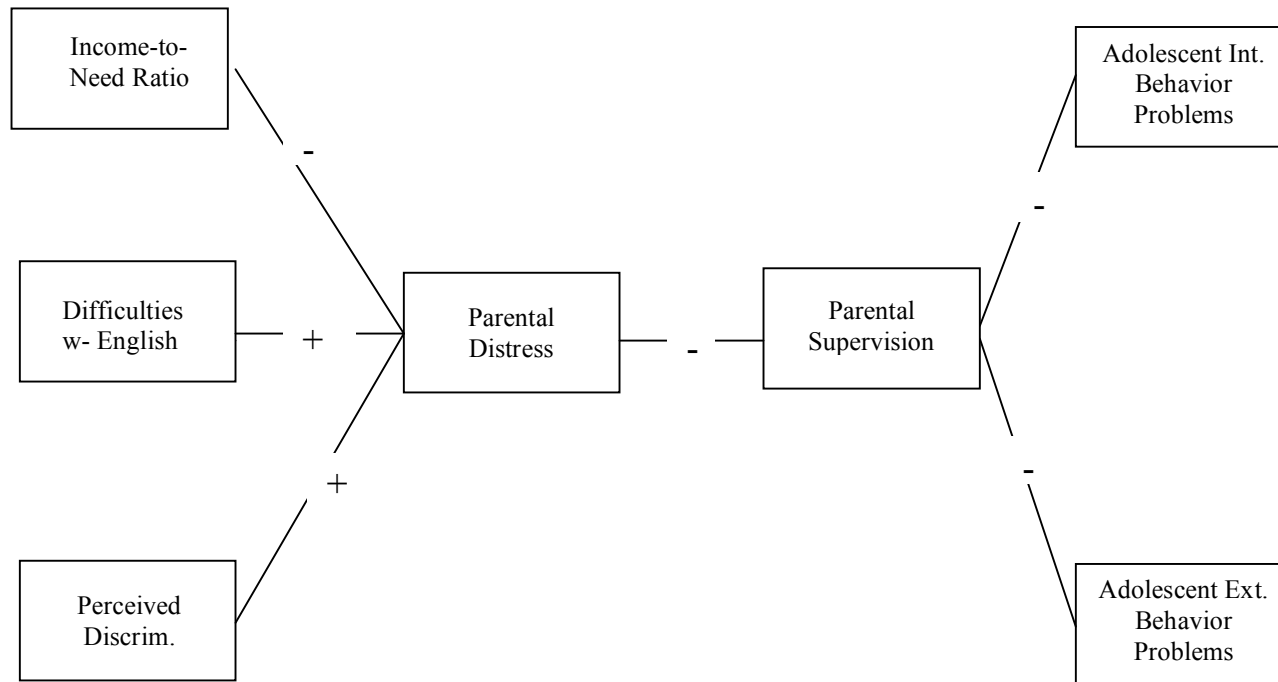
The effect of family hardship on parental distress varies depending on whether families live in low-SES or other-SES neighborhoods. Specifically, families in high-SES neighborhoods will have access to more resources and supports that mitigate the effect of financial hardship, difficulty with English, and perceived discrimination. In contrast, the effect of family hardship on parental distress is magnified for families in low-SES neighborhoods.

Contributions of the Study

The present study contributes to existing theoretical and empirical knowledge in a number of ways. First, the study attempts to link knowledge in sociology about the associations between social context and child and family outcomes to emerging knowledge in human development and family studies about family process and its influence on adolescent outcomes. Specifically, the study draws on knowledge and

theorizing about socio-structural influences (such as inequalities in the labor market and discrimination and residential segregation) to identify the important dimensions of social context and the unique hardships that influence the lives of Mexican immigrants. With these factors in mind, the study examines the extent to and manner in which parental hardship is associated with parental distress, parenting practices, and adolescent well-being. In so doing, the study separately examines the influence of neighborhood social context and the influence of the family. Finally, the study allows an examination of a relatively large, community (rather than a school-based or service-based) sample of foreign-born Mexican parents and their children representing a range of socio-economic conditions, and drawn from a broad range of neighborhood contexts within a single city.

Figure 1. Path Diagram for the Hypothesized Model



CHAPTER IV

METHODS

Data and Research Design

Data for the study are drawn from the Project for Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods (PHDCN; Earls, Brooks-Gunn, Raudenbush, & Sampson, 2002), which was designed to examine how individual, family, and neighborhood characteristics influence child and adolescent anti-social behavior and educational outcomes. The PHDCN used two main data collection strategies, the Community Survey and the Longitudinal Cohort study (or the cohort study). The Community Survey used cluster analysis to combine all 847 census tracts of the city of Chicago into 343 neighborhood clusters or contiguous census tracts that were similar in terms of socio-economic status (SES), racial or ethnic composition, and population size (approximately 8,000 residents in each). Data were collected from 8,782 community residents and experts recruited from these 343 clusters on the social structure and dynamics of their neighborhoods. Participants in the cohort study were selected from a stratified probability sample of 80 of the original 343 neighborhood clusters. The cohort study neighborhood stratification categories were seven racial/ethnic group strata and three socioeconomic categories. Cohort study participants were 6,227 caregivers and their children aged 0, 3, 6, 9, 12, 15, and 18 years at baseline from whom data were collected through in-person interviews in

three waves, 1994-1997, 1997-1999, and 2000-2001. Although the adults who participated in the Community Survey are not necessarily the same as those who participated in the cohort study, it is possible to link cohort study participants to their respective neighborhoods. Longitudinal cohort surveys were conducted in English unless the interviewer or respondent determined that it was better to proceed in Spanish or Polish (see Earls & Buka, 1997; Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000 for more detail).

The sub-sample for the present study consists of 433 primary caregivers living in 56 of the 80 cohort study neighborhood clusters. To be included in the study primary caregivers or their partners had to be born in Mexico and have children aged 12 or 15 years. Adult participants were predominantly mothers (97%) who had lived in the U.S. an average of 14 years. In spite of their length of stay, the majority of respondents (i.e. roughly 70%) were citizens of Mexico. Almost two-thirds of respondents had not completed high school and lived in households with annual incomes below \$30,000. The median age of caregivers was 39.5 years, most were married (73%), and the average family size was 6 persons. The demographic characteristics of sample participants are shown in Table 1.

Measures

The measures used in the study were administered during wave 1 of data collection for the PHDCN. Information on English language difficulties, household income versus need, perceived discrimination, parental distress, and parental supervision was collected from primary caregivers. By contrast, information on adolescent

internalizing and externalizing behaviors was collected using parent reports and child reports. However because of the unreliability of the child reports for this sample (Cronbach's alphas for the internalizing and externalizing subscales were .36 and .63 respectively compared to .80 and .71 for the parent reports) and the non-converging results, I included only parent reports of adolescent adjustment. Indicators of enforceable trust and cohesion were measured at the neighborhood level using reports from community residents and leaders. Neighborhood ethnic composition was assessed using census data.

Family Hardship

Income-to-need ratio. Information on family economic hardship was obtained from primary caregivers about the household. Primary caregivers were asked the total family income for their household and response items were coded 1 (*less than \$5,000*), 2 (*between \$5,000 and \$9,999*), 3 (*between \$10,000 and \$29,000*), 4 (*between \$20,000 and \$29,999*), 5 (*between \$30,000 and \$39,999*), 6 (*between \$40,000 and \$49,999*), and 7 (*more than \$50,000*). Following the technique used by Gutman et al. (2005), a value of \$3,500 used for the first category and a value of \$65,000 assigned to category 7. The midpoint of the range was used for all other categories. Household income was then divided by the poverty threshold adjusted for the number of people in the household. The weighted average thresholds of the period of data collection for families of three, four, five, six, seven, eight and nine or more persons (using 1996 values to be conservative) were \$12,516, \$16,036, \$18,952, \$21,389, \$24,268, \$27,091 and \$31,971 respectively.

An income-to-need ratio of 1 or more indicates that the standardized family income is equal to or above the poverty thresholds and therefore less likely to experience financial hardship, whereas an income-to-need ratio of less than 1 indicates that the standardized family income is below the poverty threshold and therefore more likely to experience financial hardship.

Difficulties with English language. Primary caregivers responded to three questions related to difficulties associated with understanding or being understood in English and with English language use. The questions were, “How often has it been hard for you to get along with others because you don’t speak English well?” “How often has it been hard for you to get good grades or do well at a job because of problems understanding English?” and “What language do you speak the most?” Response options for the first two questions ranged from 1 (*never*) to 4 (*always*) and response options to the last question ranged from 1 (*English only*) to 4 (*mostly Spanish*). Higher scores reflect greater difficulties with being understood or using English. Cronbach’s alpha for the measure was .57.

Perceived ethnic discrimination. Primary caregivers responded to 3 questions about perceived ethnic discrimination. The questions were, “How often do people dislike you because of your ethnic group or race?” “How often are you treated unfairly at school or work because of your ethnic group or race?” and “How often have you seen friends treated badly because of their ethnic group or race?” Response options ranged from 1 (*never*) to 3 (*often*). A total score was obtained by summing the responses and higher

scores reflect higher levels of perceived discrimination. Cronbach's alpha for the measure was .70.

The Context and Character of Parenting

Parent psychological distress. Primary caregivers responded to 4 questions related to parental psychological distress. The questions were, "Has [mother/father] ever suffered from depression, that is, they have felt so low for a period of at least two weeks that they hardly ate or slept, or couldn't work or do whatever they usually do?" "Has [mother/father] ever had problems with their nerves or had a nervous breakdown?" "Has [mother/father] ever talked to a doctor or a counselor about any emotional problems or problems they might have had with alcohol or drugs?" "Has [mother/father] ever been hospitalized because of emotional problems or because of drug and alcohol problems?" Response options were coded 0 (*no*) or 1 (*yes*) and a composite measure of parental distress was computed by summing the results of the 4 items. Higher total scores indicate higher levels of parental distress. Kuder Richardson's alpha for this scale is .77.

Parental supervision. Information on parental supervision was obtained from primary caregiver responses to 24 items of the supervision subscale of the PHDCN Homelife interview. The Homelife is an adapted version of the H.O.M.E. (Bradley & Caldwell, 1984; Linver, Brooks-Gunn, & Cabrera, 2004). The questions included: "Subject has a set time (curfew) to be home on school nights," "When primary caregiver (PC) is not available to subject at home, reasonable procedures have been established for him/her to check in with PC, or their designee, on weekends and after school," "PC

establishes rules of subject's behavior with peers and asks questions to determine whether they are being followed" "Subject is not allowed to wander in public places without adult supervision for more than 3 hours," "PC sets limits for subject and generally enforces them." Response options were coded 0 (*no*) or 1 (*yes*), and a composite measure of parental supervision was computed by summing the results of the 24 items. Higher total scores indicate higher levels of supervision. Kuder-Richardson's alpha for this scale is .78.

Adolescent Outcomes

Adolescent Adjustment. Adolescent adjustment was assessed using the summed ratings of primary caregiver reports on the Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL; Achenbach, 1991). CBCL items ask parents to rate their children on a list of 113 emotions and behaviors. Response options were coded 0 (*not true*), 1 (*somewhat or sometimes true*) and 2 (*very true*). Higher scores indicated higher levels of internalizing or externalizing problems. The internalizing subscale assesses problems such as social withdrawal, somatic complaints, and anxiety or depression and included items such as "Can't concentrate, can't pay attention for long," "Complains of loneliness," "Doesn't feel guilty after misbehaving." The externalizing subscale assesses problems such as delinquent and aggressive behavior and included items such as "gets into many fights" and "breaks rules," "truancy, skips school." Higher scores indicate higher levels of internalizing and externalizing behavior problems. Cronbach's alphas for the internalizing and externalizing subscales were .80 and .71 respectively.

Moderating Variables

Social Capital. Social capital was measured along two commonly-used domains namely enforceable trust and social cohesion. To measure enforceable trust community residents responded to 5 statements about the extent to which they knew each other and monitored neighborhood-level activity. The statements were, “There are adults in this neighborhood that children can look up to,” “You can count on adults in this neighborhood to watch out that children are safe and don’t get in trouble,” “Parents in this neighborhood know their children’s friends,” “Adults in this neighborhood know who the local children are,” “Parents in this neighborhood generally know each other.” Response options ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) therefore, the higher the score the greater the level of within group solidarity. An average score was obtained by summing the responses to the five items, and dividing the total by 5. Cronbach’s alpha for the measure was .65. To measure social cohesion, community residents responded to 5 statements about social relations in the neighborhood. The statements were, “This is a close knit neighborhood,” “People are willing to help neighbors,” “People do not get along,” (reverse coded) “People in the neighborhood do not share the same values,” (reverse coded) and “People in the neighborhood can be trusted.” Response options ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) therefore, the higher the score the greater the level of within group solidarity. An average score was obtained by summing the responses to the five items, and dividing the total by 5. Cronbach’s alpha for the measure was .94. I took the midpoint of each dimension and

families that scored above the average were assigned a value of 1 whereas families that scored below the average were assigned a value of 0. I then summed the scores of enforceable trust and cohesion, and families that scored 2 were assigned to the high trust and cohesion group, whereas families that scored 0 or 1 were assigned to the other level of trust and cohesion group.

Ethnic composition. The PHDCN used census data to define seven levels of ethnic composition: (a) 70% or more African American; (b) 70% or more European American; (c) 70% or more Latino; (d) 20% Latino and European American; (e) 20% Latino and African American; (f) 20% African American and European American, and (g) other ethnic or racial combination. For the moderation analysis I split the sample into two non-overlapping groups: a low to moderate Latino concentration group consisting of families in neighborhoods with 69% or fewer Latino families, and a high Latino concentration group consisting of families with 70% or more Latino families.

Neighborhood Socio-economic Status. The PHDCN used census data to define three levels of socio-economic status: low, medium, and high.

Analytic Strategy

To begin with, intercorrelations, means, ranges, standard deviations, skew, and kurtosis were computed for all variables using SPSS v. 17 in order to explore relations among variables, and to describe the data in terms of central tendency and spread, variance, the distributional symmetry of scores, and the overall shape of the distribution. In the next step, path analysis using LISREL 8.8 with the covariance matrix as input was

used to examine the hypothesized relations among observed variables shown in Figure 1.

Path analysis in structural equation modeling (SEM) uses full information maximum likelihood estimation (FIML) to deal with missing variables. Rather than deleting cases with missing data or imputing values, FIML uses all the available data to produce a maximum likelihood estimated and has been found to be efficient and unbiased for data that are missing completely at random (Acock, 2005). SEM simultaneously examines the strength of the relations among measures, removes bias by separating measurement and random error, and tests the goodness of fit of the theoretical model. The indices of fit that were used in the analysis are chi square (χ^2), which is a universal absolute fit index. A non-significant chi-square indicates that the sample covariance matrix fits the implied covariance matrix. However, it is difficult to obtain a non-significant test when sample sizes exceed 250 participants so other tests were used. Indices of absolute fit (i.e. that test the extent to which the observed covariance/correlation matrix reproduces the theoretical covariance/correlation matrix) are the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) and the standardized root mean squared residual (SRMR). The RMSEA is based on the analysis of the covariance matrix. It presents the advantage of going beyond point estimates and provides confidence intervals. Values between 0.08 and 0.05 indicate acceptable fit, while values below 0.05 indicate good to excellent fit. The SRMS is based on the analysis of correlation residuals and values of 0.9 or higher indicate a good fit to the data. Comparative fit indices assess the extent to which the model under consideration is better

or worse than a competing model and include the non-normed fit index (NNFI) and the comparative fit index (CFI). The NNFI is the most robust of fit indices across sample sizes and is recommended for sample sizes larger than 250. Values of 0.9 or higher indicate improvement of fit over the competing model. The CFI has the advantage of going beyond point estimates and provides confidence intervals. Values of 0.9 or higher indicate good fit to the data (Raykov & Marcoulides, 2006).

To test for mediation, that is to determine whether a specific mediator reduces the strength of a direct relation between an independent variable and a dependent variable, Sobel's multivariate delta method was used when paths on both sides of hypothesized mediators were significant (see Kline, 2005; p. 162). The multivariate delta method establishes an acceptable balance between type I and type II errors (Roosa, et al., 2005).

Several tests of moderation were conducted complementary tests of moderation were used to examine the differential effects of the proposed model based on neighborhood ethnic composition and neighborhood social capital. First I conducted a two-group path analysis with families living in neighborhoods with high concentrations (i.e. 70% or more) of Latino-families, and families living in neighborhoods with other (i.e. 69% or less) concentrations of Mexican-origin families. Second I conducted a multi-group path analysis with families in neighborhoods with average or higher than average levels of social capital and families in neighborhoods with lower than average levels of social capital. If the results of each of this analysis provide a good fit to the data, a number of follow-up tests were used to locate specific, significant group differences in

observed associations. The follow-up tests included a stepwise multi-group path analysis to examine what path(s) made the greatest difference following a technique used by Murry et al. (2001). In the first step of this follow-up analysis, all the paths were constrained to be equal between the two groups. In subsequent steps each path was released, in turn, to assess any change in model fit (based on changes in the chi-square value per a 1 degree of freedom change in the model) resulting from freeing the path. In cases where a freed path led to a significant change in model fit, there is evidence that the groups differed on that path. The moderating hypotheses that the structural pathways from family hardship to parental distress and from parental distress to parental supervision would differ across levels of social capital, neighborhood ethnic composition, and neighborhood SES, and that these differences would be interactive (as opposed to direct) was assessed using the chi-square difference test (Byrne, 1998; Jaccard & Wan, 1996). A significant change in chi-square between the models suggests that there are differences in the freed structural pathways across groups (i.e. the presence of an interaction effect). In addition critical ratios were examined to locate specific, significant group differences, and the interaction effect size was calculated using the interaction effect size index (IES) (Jaccard & Wan, 1996) using the equation $\chi^2 = [1 - (\chi_1^2 / \chi_2^2)] \times 100$. Finally, and in order to simultaneously examine the independent effects of ethnic group concentration and neighborhood socio-economic status I attempted to conduct a four group path analysis (i.e. high and low neighborhood SES, and high and low neighborhood ethnic composition), but perhaps not surprisingly, there were too few

participants in the high neighborhood SES and other ethnic-mix neighborhoods group to run the analysis.

Table 1

Sample Demographics

Variable	
<hr/>	
Average age caregiver came to the United States, in years	23.3
Average age of caregiver, in years	39.5
Hispanic ethnicity (%)	96.5
Caregiver marital status (%):	
Married	75.1
Single	13.8
Partnered	11.1
Relationship to subject (%):	
Mother	89.0
Father	9.5
Household income (\$):	
< 5,000	7.1
5,000 - 9,900	7.8
10,000 - 19,999	27.0
20,000 - 29,999	25.3
30,000 - 39,999	17.8
40,000 - 49,999	8.0
> 50,000	7.0
Caregiver education:	
Less than high school	61.5
Some high school	15.9
Finished high school	7.7
More than high school	14.9
Average size of family	6.0
Language spoken:	
Spanish	77.4
Spanish and/or English	22.4
Citizenship:	
Mexican	69.5
U.S.	30.5
<hr/>	

CHAPTER V

RESULTS

Preliminary Results

The results of the preliminary analyses are presented in Table 2. All the correlations were in the expected direction. Specifically, the income-to-need ratio ($r = -.10$) and difficulties with English ($r = -.01$) were negatively associated with parental distress, and perceived discrimination ($r = .15$) was positively associated with parental distress. Parental distress was negatively associated with parental supervision ($r = -.14$), and parental supervision was negatively associated with adolescent internalizing and externalizing behavior problems ($r = -.10$, and $r = -.13$). Finally, adolescent internalizing and externalizing behaviors were positively associated with each other ($r = .64$).

An examination of skew and kurtosis values indicated that the income-to-need ratio, difficulties with English, perceived discrimination, parental supervision, and internalizing and externalizing behaviors were not highly skewed. Parental distress scores were more skewed (skew = 2.66, kurtosis = 7.47) with a sharp peak of scores that was on average lower than its mean (Howell, 2002; Klein, 2005; Vogt, 1999), a finding that was not entirely surprising given that it measured comparatively high levels of anxiety or depression, and depressive behaviors. However, because parameter estimates and statistical inferences in structural equation models using maximum likelihood estimation

are robust even when the assumption of multivariate normality is violated, I did not transform the data to reduce skewness for any measures in the study (Bollen, 1989).

A comparison of the means for groups both across and within moderating models indicates that perceived discrimination and parental supervision were comparable in all of the models. A comparison of the means for families in below average social capital versus above average social capital indicated that the groups were comparable on four of the seven variables used in the study but differed on the income-to-need ratio, difficulties with English, and adolescent internalizing and externalizing behavior problems. Specifically, families in neighborhoods with below average capital had lower income-to-need ratios, more difficulties with English, and reported higher levels of adolescent internalizing behaviors than families in neighborhoods with above average social capital. A comparison of the group means for families in other ethnic-mix neighborhoods versus families in Latino neighborhoods indicated that the groups were comparable on six of the seven variables used in the study and differed only on the income-to-need ratio. That is, families in Latino neighborhoods had lower income-to-need ratios than families in other ethnic-mix neighborhoods. Finally, a comparison of the means for families in neighborhoods with low socio-economic status indicated that families were comparable along two of the variables measured, but differed on the income-to-need ratio, difficulties with English, psychological distress, and adolescent internalizing and externalizing behavior problems when compared to their counterparts in other SES neighborhoods. Specifically, families in low SES neighborhoods had lower income-to-need ratios, more

difficulties with English, higher levels of psychological distress, and reported higher levels of adolescent internalizing and externalizing behavior problems than their counterparts in other SES neighborhoods (see Tables 3, 4, 5, and 6).

Model Testing

Hypothesized Model

The hypothesized path model provided a poor fit to the data ($\chi^2 = 203.92$ (23), $p < .00$, RMSEA = 0.16, SRMR = 0.13, CFI = 0.15, NNFI = 0.01) and showed no significant relation between difficulties with English and parental distress. Estimates for the hypothesized model are presented in Table 7. The non-significant path was therefore deleted from the model. An examination of the modification indices suggested an association between the residual variances of child internalizing and externalizing behavior problems (which are subscales of the parent report of the Child Behavior Checklist), and an association between parental distress and adolescent externalizing behavior problems. Because the suggested associations were justifiable from both a measurement and theoretical/empirical basis (see Zhou & Bankston, 1994) these paths were freed in the re-specified model. Correlating the residual variances between child internalizing and externalizing behavior problems, freeing the path from parental distress to adolescent externalizing behavior problems, and fixing the paths from difficulties with English language and parental psychological distress to zero provided better fit to the data than the original hypothesized model ($\chi^2 = 20.63$ (10), $p < .02$, RMSEA = 0.05, SRMR = 0.06, CFI = 0.95, NNFI = 0.93).

Re-specified or Fitted Model

Unstandardized parameter estimates for the fitted baseline model are presented in Figure 2 and/or Table 8. As shown, income-to-need ratio was negatively associated with parental psychological distress ($\beta = -.10, p < .05$), which means that families with higher income-to-need ratios (and who therefore experienced less financial hardship) report fewer psychological distress compared to parents with lower income-to-need ratios. Perceived discrimination was positively associated with parent psychological distress ($\beta = .09, p < .01$) and adolescent externalizing behavior ($\beta = .57, p < .01$), which means that higher levels of perceived discrimination by primary caregivers was associated with both higher levels of parental psychological distress and higher levels of adolescent behavior problems. Psychological distress in turn was negatively associated with parental supervision ($\beta = -.52, p < .01$), and parental supervision was negatively associated with adolescent internalizing behavior problems ($\beta = -.24, p < .05$), and externalizing behavior problems ($\beta = -.35, p < .01$). This means that parents who reported higher levels of psychological distress also reported lower levels of supervision, while parents who reported higher levels of supervision also reported fewer adolescent internalizing and externalizing behavior problems. The model explained 3% of the variance in distress, 2% of the variance in parental supervision, 1% of the variance in child internalizing behavior, and 3% of the variance in child externalizing behavior.

Mediation Analysis

Results from Sobel's test provided support for the mediating effect between the

income-to-need ratio and parental supervision through parental distress, $z = -1.96$, $p = .05$, and for perceived discrimination and parental supervision through parental distress, $z = -2.34$, $p = .05$.

Moderation Analyses

Multiple group path analysis was used to test whether the baseline refitted or re-specified model differed when applied to families in neighborhoods with below and above average social capital, Latino and other-ethnic mix neighborhoods, and low- versus other-SES neighborhoods. The fit for all three moderation models, with all paths estimated, was satisfactory (see Tables 9, 10, and 11) although the fit indices for the above average social capital group were better than the below average social capital group, and the fit indices for the low Latino neighborhood group were better than the other ethnic mix neighborhood group. Next, I conducted a series of two-group analyses where a fully constrained model was compared to models in which the parameters were released one at a time. The fit in all three stepwise moderation models was satisfactory and I found a non-significant difference in χ^2 values, at $p = .05$, from one step to another as shown in Tables 12, 13, and 14. However, I found a significant difference in χ^2 values, at $p = .10$, when freeing the path from the income-to-need ratio to parental distress, $\Delta\chi^2 = 3.76(1)$ and from perceived discrimination to adolescent externalizing behavior, $\Delta\chi^2 = 3.78(1)$ for the tests of invariance by ethnic composition and neighborhood socio-economic status, and when freeing the path from income-to-need to parental distress, $\Delta\chi^2 = 3.25(1)$ for the test of invariance by neighborhood socio-economic status. The results

suggest that, at $p = .10$, the negative association between the income-to-need ratio and parental distress differ significantly (i.e. different slope) for families in Latino neighborhoods compared to families in other ethnic-mix neighborhoods, and in for families in neighborhoods with low socio-economic status compared to families in neighborhoods with other socioeconomic status. In spite of the interaction effect at a higher probability, I decided to maintain the null hypothesis based on the non-significance of the chi square at $p = .05$, the relatively large magnitude of the GFIs and NFIs indicating a lack of deterioration in fit across stepwise analyses (Bollen, 1989). I therefore concluded that the general form of the model is the same for each moderator, but that the strength of the paths differs across ethnic composition, social capital, and neighborhood socio-economic status groups (see Tables 12, 13, and 14).

Summary of Results

The first goal of the study was to examine the linkages between hardships associated with Mexican immigrant status and parental distress, and between parental distress and parental supervision. The second goal of the study was to examine the extent to which parental distress mediates the association between family hardship and parental supervision. The third goal of the study was to examine the linkages between parental supervision and adolescent internalizing and externalizing behavior problems. The final goal of the study was to examine the moderating effects of neighborhood social context on the hypothesized model.

Family Hardship, Parental Distress, and Parental Supervision

This study examined the linkages between three forms of parental hardship and parental distress and found that the income-to-need ratio was negatively associated with parental distress, and perceived discrimination was positively associated with parental distress. Although not hypothesized in the original model, the study found a direct relation between perceived discrimination and adolescent externalizing behavior problems. In contrast, difficulties with English, the third hypothesized hardship experienced by Mexican immigrant families, was not associated with parental distress.

Parental Supervision and Adolescent Adjustment

Parental supervision is a measure of the extent to which parents in the study monitor and provide structure and guidance for their children and as hypothesized, the study found that higher levels of supervision were associated with lower levels of adolescent internalizing and externalizing behavior problems.

Mediation Model

In this study, parental distress was a measure of the extent to which parents were depressed or experienced emotional problems that affected their daily routines (i.e. eating or sleeping, reports of a nervous breakdown or substance abuse problems) and it was hypothesized that family hardship would be associated with parental supervision through parental distress. Findings from the mediation analyses support the hypothesis of an indirect relation between financial hardship and parental supervision through parental distress, and for perceived discrimination and parental supervision through parental

distress.

Moderation Models

The multi-group solutions indicate that the general form of the model is the same across all the groups tested, but that the strengths of the paths differ across social capital, ethnic composition, and neighborhood SES moderation models (see Tables 9-11 for a summary of results).

Social capital. The results of the study indicate that higher income-to-need ratios are associated with less parental distress for families in neighborhoods with above average social capital, whereas the path is non-significant for families in neighborhoods with below average social capital. Higher levels of perceived discrimination are associated with more parental distress and adolescent externalizing behaviors for families in neighborhoods with above-average social capital, but the path is non-significant for families in neighborhoods with below-average capital. The results also indicate that higher levels of parental supervision are associated with higher levels of adolescent internalizing and externalizing behaviors, but that the associations are non-significant for families in neighborhoods with below-average capital. The only association that was significant for families in neighborhoods with below-average capital and non-significant for families in neighborhoods with above-average capital was that linking higher levels of parental distress to lower levels of parental supervision. An examination of the R^2 indicates that the model explained 7% of the variance in distress, 1% of the variance in parental supervision, 2% of the variance in child internalizing behavior, and 7% of the

variance in child externalizing behavior for families in above average capital neighborhoods compared to 2%, 4%, 0%, and 1% of the variance (respectively) for families in neighborhoods with below average capital.

Ethnic composition. This two-group analysis confirmed that higher-income to need ratios were associated with lower levels of parental distress for families in Latino neighborhoods, but that the association was not significant for families in other ethnic-mix neighborhoods. The analysis also confirmed that higher levels of perceived discrimination were associated with more parental distress in both moderating groups, and that higher levels of perceived discrimination were associated with more adolescent externalizing behavior problems, an association that was only significant for families in Latino neighborhoods. The study further confirms that higher levels of parental distress are associated with lower levels of parental supervision for families in Latino neighborhoods while the relation is non-significant in other ethnic-mix neighborhoods. The association between parental supervision and adolescent internalizing behavior problems was non-significant for either group. Finally, higher levels of parental supervision were associated with fewer externalizing behaviors in both groups. An examination of the R^2 indicates that the model explained 8% of the variance in distress, 7% of the variance in parental supervision, 1% of the variance in child internalizing behavior, and 11% of the variance in child externalizing behavior for families in Latino neighborhoods compared to 3%, 0%, 1%, and 1% of the variance (respectively) for families in other ethnic-mix neighborhoods.

Neighborhood SES. The study provides evidence that higher income-to-need-ratios are associated with lower levels of parental distress for families in other SES neighborhoods, whereas the path is non-significant for families in low SES neighborhoods. There is also evidence that higher levels of perceived discrimination are associated with higher levels of adolescent externalizing behavior problems in other-SES neighborhoods, whereas the path is non-significant in low-SES neighborhoods. In turn, higher levels of parental distress were associated with lower levels of parental supervision in other-SES neighborhoods, but the path was non-significant in low-SES neighborhoods. Furthermore, higher levels of supervision were associated with fewer adolescent externalizing behavior problems for families in other SES neighborhoods, whereas distress was not significantly associated with supervision for families in low-SES neighborhoods. Higher levels of perceived discrimination were associated with higher levels of parental distress for families in low-SES neighborhoods, but the path was non-significant for families in other-SES neighborhoods. Finally, the association between parental supervision and adolescent internalizing behaviors was not significant for either of the moderating groups. An examination of the R^2 indicates that the model explained 3% of the variance in distress, 2% of the variance in parental supervision, 1% of the variance in child internalizing behavior, and 3% of the variance in child externalizing behavior for families in other-SES neighborhoods compared to 4%, 2%, 1%, and 2% of the variance (respectively) for families in low-SES neighborhoods.

In interpreting these results it should however be noted that the size of the

subgroups for the moderation analyses have lower statistical power than the full sample, and that the magnitude of the standard errors suggests that the path coefficients (or parameter estimates) are relatively unstable, making it difficult to obtain a significant estimate. The magnitude of the standard errors may explain some of the discrepancies in the relative size and significance of parameters estimates across groups (Edwards & Lambert, 2007; Hayduk, 1987; Raykov & Marcoulides, 2006).

Table 2

Parental Variables and Youth Adjustment Variables: Correlations and Descriptive Statistics (N = 433)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Income to need ratio ^a	–						
2. Difficulties with English ^b	-.28**	–					
3. Perceived discrimination ^c	.07	.01	–				
4. Parental distress ^d	-.10*	-.01	.15**	–			
5. Parental supervision ^e	.10*	-.13	-.03	-.14**	–		
6. Adolescent internalizing ^f	-.01	-.12*	.13**	-.14**	-.10*	–	
7. Adolescent externalizing ^g	.01	-.03	.18**	-.19**	-.13**	.64**	–

Table 2

Continued

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<i>M</i>	1.25	6.66	4.69	.37	20.52	9.44	9.55
<i>SD</i>	.88	2.19	1.48	.83	3.08	7.56	8.45
Range	0–4	3–12	3–9	0–5	5– 24	0–52	0– 61
α		.57	.70	.77	.78	.80	.71
Skew	1.16	.03	.63	2.66	-1.46	1.56	1.62
Kurtosis	1.36	-.33	-.29	7.47	3.05	3.89	4.47

Note. ^aIncome-to-need ratio: <1 = *below poverty threshold*, ≥1 = *at or above poverty threshold*. ^bDifficulties with English: 0 = *no difficulty*.

^cPerceived racial discrimination: 0 = *no perceived discrimination*. ^dParental distress: 0 = *no distress*. ^eParental supervision: 0 = *no supervision*.

^fAdolescent internalizing behavior problems: 0 = *no internalizing behavior problems*. ^gAdolescent externalizing behavior problems: 0 = *no externalizing behavior problems*

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$

Table 3

Mean Differences Across Moderation Groups

Indicator	Moderation Group		
	Social Capital ^a	Ethnic Composition ^b	Neighborhood SES ^c
Average age caregiver came to the United States, in years	BA > AA		LS > OS
Average age of caregiver, in years			
Hispanic ethnicity (%)			LS > OS
Caregiver marital status (%):			
Married	BA < AA		LS < OS
Single	BA > AA		LS > OS
Partnered	BA > AA		LS > OS
Relationship to subject (%):			
Mother			
Father			
Household income:			
< 5,000	BA > AA	OC < LN	LS > OS
5,000 - 9,900	BA > AA	OC < LN	LS > OS
10,000 - 19,999	BA > AA	OC < LN	LS > OS
20,000 - 29,999	BA < AA	OC < LN	
30,000 - 39,999	BA < AA	OC > LN	LS < OS
40,000 - 49,999	BA < AA	OC > LN	LS < OS
> 50,000	BA < AA	OC > LN	LS < OS
Caregiver education:			
Less than high school	BA > AA	OC < LN	LS > OS
Some high school	BA < AA	OC > LN	LS < OS
Finished high school	BA < AA	OC < LN	LS < OS
More than high school	BA < AA	OC > LN	LS < OS
Average size of family			
Language spoken:			
Spanish			
English/English and Spanish			

Note. ^aSocial capital: BA = below average, AA = above average. ^bEthnic composition: OC = other ethnic mix, LN = Latino neighborhood. Blank cells indicate non-significant mean difference at $p < .05$.

Table 4

Means of Sample Variables by Social Capital Group

Variable	Social Capital	
	Below average	Above average
	<i>n</i> = 213	<i>n</i> = 221
Income to need ratio	1.03 _a	1.46 _b
Difficulties with English	7.14 _a	6.20 _b
Perceived discrimination	4.68 _a	4.69 _a
Parental psychological distress	0.44 _a	0.31 _a
Parental supervision	20.55 _a	20.49 _a
Adolescent internalizing behaviors	10.52 _a	8.40 _b
Adolescent externalizing behaviors	10.03 _a	9.09 _a

Note. Means in the same row that do not share subscripts differ at $p < .05$ in the Student Newman-Keuls comparisons.

Table 5

Means of Sample Variables by Ethnic Concentration Group

Variable	Ethnic Composition	
	Other ethnic-mix	Latino
	<i>n</i> = 312	<i>n</i> = 121
Income to need ratio	1.35 _a	0.98 _b
Difficulties with English	6.56 _a	6.91 _a
Perceived discrimination	4.77 _a	4.47 _a
Parental psychological distress	0.35 _a	0.43 _a
Parental supervision	20.57 _a	20.39 _a
Adolescent internalizing behaviors	9.45 _a	9.40 _a
Adolescent externalizing behaviors	9.44 _a	9.85 _a

Note. Means in the same row that do not share subscripts differ at $p < .05$ in the Student Newman-Keuls comparisons.

Table 6

Means of Sample Variables by Neighborhood SES Group

Variable	Neighborhood SES	
	Low <i>n</i> = 177	Medium to High <i>n</i> = 256
Income to need ratio	0.99 _a	1.43 _b
Difficulties with English	7.15 _a	6.32 _b
Perceived discrimination	4.68 _a	4.69 _a
Parental psychological distress	0.45 _a	0.32 _b
Parental supervision	20.37 _a	20.63 _a
Adolescent internalizing behaviors	10.96 _a	8.39 _b
Adolescent externalizing behaviors	10.45 _a	8.93 _b

Note. Means in the same row that do not share subscripts differ at $p < .05$ in the Student Newman-Keuls comparison.

Figure 2. Path Diagram for the Fitted Baseline Model (Unstandardized Coefficients)

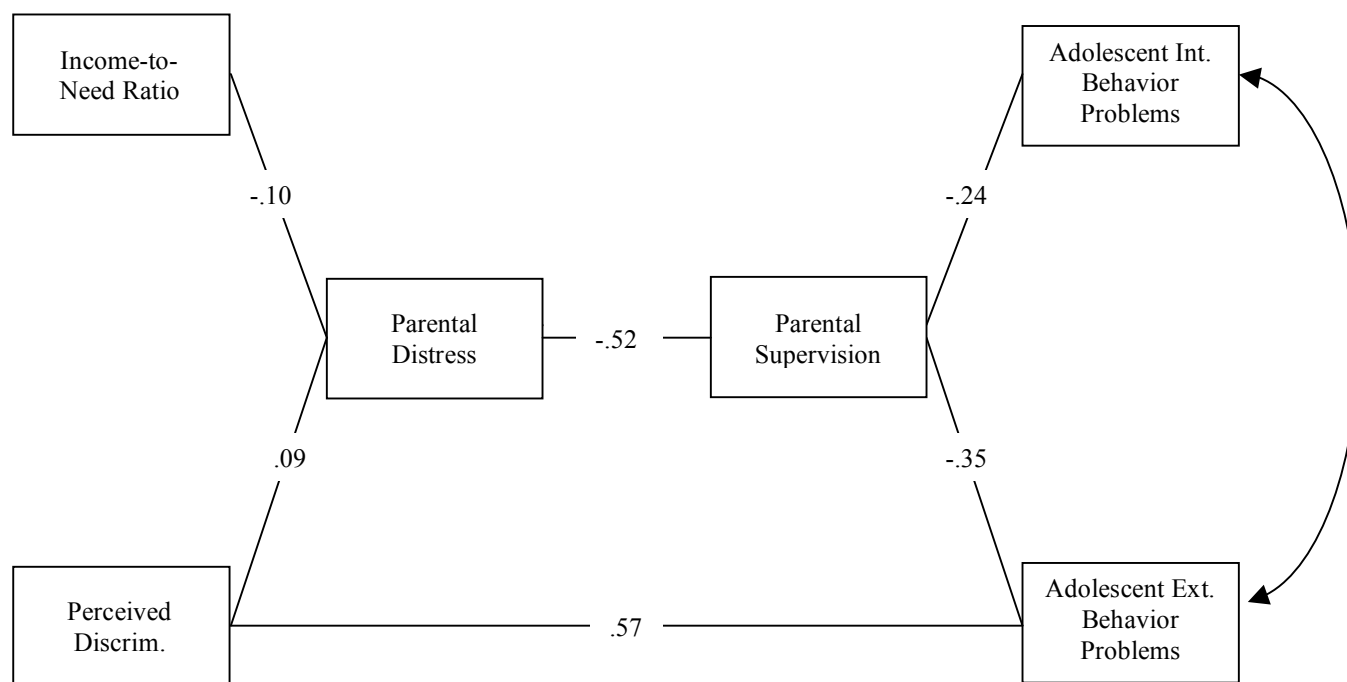


Table 7. Path Estimates for the Hypothesized Model

Unstandardized, Standardized, and Significance Levels for Model in Figure 1 (Standard Errors in Parentheses; N = 433)

<i>Parameter Estimate</i>	<i>Unstandardized</i>	<i>Standardized</i>	<i>p</i>
Structural Model			
Income to Need Ratio → Parental Distress	-.11 (.04)	-.12	.05
Difficulties with English → Parental Distress	-.02 (.03)	-.03	Na
Perceived Discrimination → Parental Distress	.09 (.03)	.16	.01
Parental Distress → Parental Supervision	-.52 (.18)	-.14	.01
Parental Supervision → Internalizing Behaviors	-.24 (.12)	-.10	.05
Parental Supervision → Externalizing Behaviors	-.36 (.13)	-.13	.01

Note: $\chi^2(18) = 203.92, p < .00$; GFI = .88; NFI = .15; RMSEA = .16

Table 8. Path Estimates for the Fited Baseline Model

Unstandardized, Standardized, and Significance Levels for Model in Figure 2 (Standardized Errors in Parentheses;

N = 433)

<i>Parameter Estimate</i>	<i>Unstandardized</i>	<i>Standardized</i>	<i>p</i>
Structural Model			
Income to Need Ratio → Parental Distress	-.10 (.04)	-.11	.05
Perceived Discrimination → Parental Distress	.09 (.03)	.16	.01
Perceived Discrimination → Externalizing Behavior	.57 (.21)	.10	.01
Parental Distress → Parental Supervision	-.52 (.18)	-.14	.01
Parental Supervision → Internalizing Behaviors	-.24 (.12)	-.10	.05

Note: $\chi^2(18) = 203.63, p < .02$; GFI = .98; NFI = .92; RMSEA = .05

Table 9.

Unstandardized, Standardized, and Significance Levels for 2-Group Social Capital Model (Standardized Errors in Parentheses; N = 433)

<i>Parameter Estimate</i>	<i>Below average n = 212</i>			<i>Above average n = 221</i>		
	<i>Unstand- ardized</i>	<i>Standard -ized</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Unstand- ardized</i>	<i>Standard -ized</i>	<i>P</i>
Structural Model						
Income to Need Ratio → Parental Distress	-.11 (.10)	-.08	<i>ns</i>	-.09 (.05)	-.11	.05
Perceived Discrimination → Parental Distress	.06 (.04)	.10	<i>ns</i>	.12 (.03)	.11	.01
Perceived Discrimination → Externalizing Behavior	.47 (.32)	.08	<i>ns</i>	.67 (.29)	.08	.05
Parental Distress → Parental Supervision	-.64 (.22)	-.19	.01	-.32 (.30)	-.17	<i>ns</i>
Parental Supervision → Internalizing Behaviors	-.18 (.19)	-.07	<i>ns</i>	-.31 (.14)	-.07	.05
Parental Supervision → Externalizing Behaviors	-.16 (.21)	-.05	<i>ns</i>	-.54 (.16)	-.25	.01

Note. $\chi^2(20) = 36.42, p < .01$; GFI = .98; NFI = .86; RMSEA = .06

Table 10.

Unstandardized, Standardized, and Significance Levels for 2-Group Ethnic Composition Model (Standardized Errors in Parentheses; N = 433)

<i>Parameter Estimate</i>	<i>Other Ethnic Mix n = 312</i>			<i>Latino Neighborhood n = 121</i>		
	<i>Unstand- ardized</i>	<i>Standard -ized</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Unstand- Ardized</i>	<i>Standard -ized</i>	<i>P</i>
Structural Model						
Income to Need Ratio → Parental Distress	-.06 (.05)	-.06	<i>ns</i>	-.34 (.14)	-.21	.05
Perceived Discrimination → Parental Distress	.08 (.03)	.13	.05	.14 (.06)	.20	.05
Perceived Discrimination → Externalizing Behavior	.38 (.25)	.07	<i>ns</i>	1.30 (.41)	.24	.01
Parental Distress → Parental Supervision	-.28 (.22)	-.07	<i>ns</i>	-.89 (.29)	-.27	.01
Parental Supervision → Internalizing Behaviors	-.26 (.14)	-.11	<i>ns</i>	-.20 (.20)	-.09	<i>ns</i>
Parental Supervision → Externalizing Behaviors	-.27 (.16)	-.10	<i>ns</i>	-.50 (.21)	-.21	.05

Note. $\chi^2(20) = 32.60, p < .04$; GFI = .96; NFI = .88; RMSEA = .05

Table 11.

Unstandardized, Standardized, and Significance Levels for 2-Group Neighborhood SES Model 8 (Standardized Errors in Parentheses; N = 433)

<i>Parameter Estimate</i>	<i>Low SES n = 177</i>			<i>Medium to High SES n=256</i>		
	<i>Unstand- ardized</i>	<i>Standard -ized</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>Unstand- Ardized</i>	<i>Standard -ized</i>	<i>p</i>
Structural Model						
Income to Need Ratio → Parental Distress	-.07 (.10)	-.07	<i>ns</i>	-.09 (.05)	-.21	.05
Perceived Discrimination → Parental Distress	.13 (.05)	.23	.01	.06 (.06)	.20	<i>ns</i>
Perceived Discrimination → Externalizing	.61 (.36)	.11	<i>ns</i>	.54 (.41)	.24	.05
Behavior						
Parental Distress → Parental Supervision	-.44 (.25)	-.12	<i>ns</i>	-.59 (.26)	-.12	.05
Parental Supervision → Internalizing Behaviors	-.20 (.21)	-.08	<i>ns</i>	-.24 (.13)	-.08	<i>ns</i>
Parental Supervision → Externalizing Behaviors	-.36 (.23)	-.13	<i>ns</i>	-.32 (.15)	-.13	.05

Note. $\chi^2(20) = 39.58, p < .01$; GFI = .97; NFI = .84; RMSEA = .07. ns = non-significant path.

Table 12.

Stepwise Tests of Invariance of Path Models for Below and Above Average Social Capital

<i>Hypothesis</i>	χ^2	<i>Df</i>	<i>prob</i>	<i>GFI</i>		<i>SRMR</i>	
				<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>
H_{equal}	40.69	26	.033	.96	.98	.089	.060
H_{Γ_1}	40.71	25	.025	.96	.98	.089	.060
H_{Γ_2}	39.50	24	.024	.96	.98	.087	.060
H_{Γ_3}	39.29	23	.018	.96	.98	.086	.060
H_{B_1}	38.84	22	.015	.96	.98	.088	.059
H_{B_2}	38.79	21	.010	.96	.98	.088	.059
H_{freed}	36.42	20	.014	.96	.98	.085	.057

Note. The subscripts indicate the path freed in each step starting with a model where all paths are constrained to be equal in the first step, and all paths are freed in the last step. Column 1 = *Above average social capital group*. Column 2 = *Below average social capital group*.

Table 13.

Tests of Invariance of Path Models for Other Ethnic Mix and Latino Neighborhoods

<i>Hypothesis</i>	χ^2	<i>Df</i>	<i>prob</i>	<i>GFI</i>		<i>SRMR</i>	
				<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>
H_{equal}	45.29	26	.011	.98	.94	.064	.110
H_{Γ_1}	41.53	25	.020	.98	.94	.064	.110
H_{Γ_2}	40.85	24	.017	.98	.95	.064	.100
H_{Γ_3}	37.07	23	.032	.98	.95	.066	.089
H_{B_1}	33.82	22	.051	.98	.96	.066	.080
H_{B_2}	33.34	21	.043	.98	.96	.066	.081
H_{freed}	32.60	20	.037	.98	.96	.067	.077

Note. The subscripts indicate the path freed in each step starting with a model where all paths are constrained to be equal in the first step, and all paths are freed in the last step. Column 1 = *Other Ethnic-mix neighborhood*. Column 2 = *Latino neighborhood*.

Table 14.

Tests of Invariance of Path Models for Low SES and Other-SES Neighborhoods

<i>Hypothesis</i>	χ^2	<i>df</i>	<i>prob</i>	<i>GFI</i>		<i>SRMR</i>	
				<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>
H_{equal}	45.08	26	.012	.97	.97	.080	.069
H_{Γ_1}	41.83	25	.019	.97	.97	.080	.069
H_{Γ_2}	39.96	24	.022	.97	.97	.077	.070
H_{Γ_3}	39.92	23	.016	.97	.97	.077	.070
H_{B_1}	39.81	22	.011	.97	.97	.077	.069
H_{B_2}	39.54	21	.008	.97	.97	.077	.069
H_{freed}	39.58	20	.006	.97	.97	.077	.069

Note. The subscripts indicate the path freed in each step starting with a model where all paths are constrained to be equal in the first step, and all paths are freed in the last step. Column 1 = *Low socio-economic status*. Column 2 = *Medium to high socio-economic status*.

CHAPTER VI

INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

The main purpose of the study was to test a conceptual model that examines the linkages among hardships arising from being an immigrant ethnic minority, parental distress, parenting practices, and adolescent adjustment, and to examine the extent to which these linkages differ across neighborhood social contexts. The results of this exploratory study support the proposed integrated conceptual model with hypothesized associations among financial hardship and parental distress; perceived discrimination and parental distress; perceived discrimination and adolescent externalizing behavior problems; and parental distress, parenting practices, and adolescent internalizing and externalizing behavior problems. However, the results of the study do not support the moderating effects of neighborhood social capital, neighborhood ethnic composition, and neighborhood socio-economic status on the proposed linkages.

The Social Position of Participant Families

Chapter two of the study provided an overview of the labor, social, and legal conditions that have shaped the Mexican immigrant experience in Chicago, and the places that they occupy as a general group. The results of the descriptive demographic analyses show that the 400+ families in the study fit a general description of people who enter the country in their early years, come with little formal training but work, are married, yet—contrary to traditional views that two-parent households are less likely to

experience poverty—fall into the lower income brackets, live in low to middle income neighborhoods, maintain their language and culture of origin, and do not have American citizenship in spite of a relatively long length of stay in the United States. The descriptive analyses further point to the diversity of the sample and suggest that selectivity affects where families with different characteristics live, and furthermore raises the question of whether the effects are due to location or to variations in individual and family characteristics and family process. For example, families with incomes below \$20,000 (corresponding roughly to the 1996 poverty threshold for a family six) tended to live in neighborhoods that had below average social capital, were predominantly Latino, and low in SES but I cannot ascertain, with certainty, if this was by choice or circumstance. Similarly, caregivers who were single or partnered, and caregivers who entered the United States younger, were more likely to live in neighborhoods with below average social capital, and low in SES than their married and older counterparts. Furthermore, and perhaps not surprisingly, caregivers with lower educational levels were more likely to live in neighborhoods with below average social capital, same ethnic or low SES neighborhoods (see Table 2). Therefore, for the purposes of this study I take the view that both individual and neighborhood factors are at play, even if I cannot examine them independently.

Discussion of Findings

The study provides support for the linkages between two hardships associated with the Mexican immigrant experience (i.e. financial hardship and perceived discrimination) and parental distress. However and unlike many studies of immigrant

assimilation or adjustment, I found no association between difficulties with English and parental distress perhaps because distress was measured at a general level and not linked to a specific cause (e.g. high levels of anxiety because of an inability to communicate directly with people in formal institutions about employment opportunities and advancement), or perhaps because of the low reliability of the measure ($\alpha = .57$) indicating systematic bias.

The results of the study also provide support for the linkages between parental distress and parental supervision. However, the study found that financial hardship and perceived discrimination are indirectly related to parental supervision through parental distress, indicating that the manner in which parents deal with and respond to stress matters. Finally the study found that higher levels of supervision are associated with lower levels of internalizing and externalizing behavior problems. These findings are consistent with the work of researchers such as Conger et al. (1992, 1994) and McLoyd (1990) that indicates an association between objective and subjective measures of economic stress, parental distress, parenting and adolescent adjustment in urban and rural settings, and with parents of different racial/ethnic backgrounds. However, the current model extends family stress theory by considering the effects of perceived discrimination (i.e. non-economic or non-material sources of hardship) that not only influences parents, but also directly and indirectly influences adolescent adjustment.

Although not hypothesized in the original model, this study also found that parents who felt discriminated against and/or marginalized or treated unfairly based on their race or ethnicity, reported higher levels of adolescent externalizing behavior

problems perhaps because their feelings of unfair treatment are communicated to their adolescent children who in turn act out their frustration.

Moderation

The results of the moderation analyses suggest that although a number of path coefficients differ across groups, the differences in parameter estimates are not significant at the normally accepted level of $p < .05$, even if some are significant at $p = .10$. I conclude therefore that families across the three neighborhood settings measured experience and respond to hardship in a similar fashion, but that the strength of the associations differs based not only on family characteristics as discussed at the beginning of the chapter, but also based on neighborhood constraints and opportunities. Specifically, the hypothesized relations tended to be stronger for families in neighborhoods that are predominantly Latino, and neighborhoods with medium to high SES and above average levels of social capital. Building on the suggestion by Sampson et al. (2002) that concentrated affluence—and not poverty—creates stability and promotes a sense of shared responsibility and expectations for collective action to the benefit of a broader group, it is plausible that families in neighborhoods with a large number of same-ethnic residents, or families in resource-rich neighborhoods find it easier to access these social resources than families in other types of neighborhood. Specifically, the results of the moderating analysis suggest that the concentration of neighborhood resources (whether measured as a function of capital, ethnic composition, or socio-economic status) matters, and accentuates the relations between financial hardship and parental distress,

parental distress and parental supervision, and perceived discrimination and adolescent externalizing behavior problems.

Strengths and Limitations of the Study

The strengths of this study are its use of a comparatively large, community-based sample of Mexican-born caregivers from a range of socio-economic backgrounds and drawn from 56 of 80 neighborhood clusters in the city of Chicago. Relatively few of the studies of Mexican families reviewed for the dissertation use samples sizes of over 200 or distinguish between foreign-born and native-born caregivers. In addition, few studies sampled families by neighborhood, which allows an examination of the social context of Mexican immigrants in the mid 1990s and its effect on the associations among different forms of hardship, parental distress, parenting practices, and adolescent internalizing and externalizing behavior problems. Because the study is exploratory in nature an emphasis is placed on verifying relations among variables (i.e. power) rather than on generalizing findings to other Mexican-born families, in other neighborhoods, cities, and social, political and historical times. Regardless, findings from the study must be understood in light of both its limitations and strengths.

The limitations include issues related to measurement and model conceptualization, each discussed separately below. On the subject of measurement, the variables used in the model were measured using a single source of data (parent reports), which increases the chance of inflating the parameters because of shared method variance. This concern was partially addressed by correlating the error terms for the parent reports of internalizing and externalizing behavior problems. In addition, most of

the family measures are composite scores whose psychometric properties cannot accurately be estimated and that exhibit restricted range, which suggests measurement error and the possible underestimation of the effects of parental supervision, and an over estimation of the income-to-need ratio and perceived discrimination. Another methodological issue in this study in particular, and the neighborhood effects research in general, is the ability to isolate the effects that are due to the differential selection of individuals into certain neighborhoods from the effects of location (Sampson et al., 2002).

Second is the issue of model conceptualization. To begin with, the study assumes that the relations among variables in the model are linear and additive. However, family stress theories suggest that the effects of stressor pileup are not additive but rather curvilinear and are a reflection of the number and impact of these stressors, and the duration of the exposure (Dumka, Roosa, & Jackson, 1997). In addition, and because of the way the neighborhood clusters were created in PHDCN, it is clear that ethnic composition interacts with neighborhood socio-economic status and that there are likely different effects at different concentrations of this multi-dimensional variable. However, I was unable to examine a possible interaction between neighborhood SES and ethnic concentration because there were too few participants in the medium to high SES and other neighborhood ethnic-mix group to run a 4-group analysis.

Furthermore, although the proposed model is structured by theory and empirical evidence that suggests reciprocal influences that change over time, the study uses a cross-sectional design, examines uni-directional effects and therefore cannot come to any

conclusions about the causal order of variables, or about second- or third- order interactions. For example, a question posed by Burton and Jarrett (2000) in their review of the literature on the place of family in neighborhood and child development research was whether parenting strategies are a reaction to neighborhood conditions, children's behavior, or even an interaction among these levels. In addition, the low R^2 suggest a need to think about additional variables that are not included in the study but might have mediated, increased, or decreased parents' reports of distress, and parenting. Some of these variables might include subjective appraisals about financial strain, parents' attributions about parenting self-efficacy, the nature and quality of family relationships, and social support. In addition, this study examines the effects of two domains of social capital, but there are other forms of capital that are exchanged and that influence what people do, the resources they can or cannot access, and who they are (Portes, 2000). Along similar lines, Bronfenbrenner (1979) and Bradley (2002) remind us that the work of caregiving does not take place in a single and isolated environment, but occurs in many environments which may or may not overlap, and may involve many different people offering different types of relationships and support.

Finally, the study assumes isolated effects in space and time and therefore does not (or cannot) explicitly examine effects that may be felt due to geographic proximity to other neighborhoods with different sets of resources and social institutions, as might be the case for low-income families who live close to more affluent neighborhoods and who involve their children in structured activities outside of their immediate places of life (Sampson et al., 1999). In fact, researchers such as Marcuse (1998) argue that

neighborhoods with concentrations of same-ethnic families are primarily distinguished by their exclusion from the economic and social life of the surrounding community.

Research, Policy, and Practice Implications

The first wave of data collection for the PHDCN was conducted between 1994 and 1997 and the economic, social, and political climate of the United States has changed quite dramatically since then suggesting the need for greater attention to the plight of immigrant newcomers. The first reason for the change has been steady economic decline which eventually led to the current recession characterized by a contraction of the labor market and high unemployment rates, all of which have historically fostered anti-immigrant sentiment (Buriel & DeMent, 1997). Second has been increasing fiscal conservatism reflected by federal laws such as the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996 that made immigrants who entered the United States without permanent residency status ineligible for a variety of programs and services such as Medicaid and the SCHIP during the first five years of their stay. Lastly are the events of September 11, 2001, which bolstered the spirit of nationalism, fed notions of fear, and mobilized Americans against non-nationals as evidenced by the complete restructuring of the former Immigration and Naturalization Service, the tightening of border controls, and increased monitoring of people within the country under the auspices of the Patriot Act. In other words, immigrants today are entering a social climate that is more restrictive, and they are increasingly under surveillance and excluded from public services. However, it is clear that current immigration trends have and will continue to transform America's racial and ethnic landscape, and that this new

tide of immigration cannot be ignored by anyone interested in understanding past and current demographic realities in order to identify and address important social issues, and to support the well-being of future generations. Although exploratory in nature this study has several implications for research and policy.

Research Implications

This study used secondary data collected by an interdisciplinary group of researchers to answer a set of questions, using a conceptual framework that are somewhat different from my own. Specifically, the central goal of the PHDCN was to examine the causes of juvenile delinquency, crime, substance abuse and violence, while I am more interested in pro-social behaviors and processes. Furthermore, while PHDCN examined the effect of families, schools, and neighborhoods on child and adolescent outcomes in a general population, I was more interested in the linkages between family hardship and parental well-being, and subsequently among parental well-being, parenting practices, and adolescent adjustment in a specific group of foreign-born parents. Therefore, although the data-set provided a unique opportunity to simultaneously examine family process across a variety of neighborhood contexts, it also posed a number of measurement challenges. First, the available data did not allow an in-depth and robust examination of family process and/or child outcome variables in those areas of life that are considered supportive and/or normative such as positive marital or family relations, self-esteem, and self-efficacy. Furthermore, the PHDCN sampling frame and data collection strategy were developed to generate a representative community sample of Chicago residents, whereas I was more interested in Mexican-born residents. As a result

the sub-sample for the study may not be representative of Mexican immigrant families in Chicago as a whole and at a particular place in time, and only allows an exploratory analysis of the mediating effect of family context and process. Future studies could benefit from the use of robust scales that measure the multidimensional constructs of interest, as well as the use of data from multiple informants (such as primary caregivers and children) and multiple measurement approaches (self-response and observation). Furthermore, future studies should examine both individual-level data and neighborhood-level data.

The theoretically driven study of the experience of immigrants has primarily been framed by assimilation and segmented assimilation theory but the results of the present analysis suggest the need to expand this framework to non-culturally based sources of stress. For example, unlike refugees and asylum-seekers most Mexican immigrants to the U.S. come voluntarily, although sometimes at great cost in terms of financial, social, and family resources. Recent studies point to the importance of unmet cost-benefit assessments at the family or individual levels as an additional, yet neglected source of stress for Latino immigrants in the United States (Negy, Schwartz, & Reig-Ferrer, 2009). Second, the results of the study suggest that although immigrant families experience stress, these stressors may be not only related to financial hardship or culture change, but also to perceptions of unequal treatment and exclusion. Models of immigrant family stress and adolescent adjustment could more closely examine the range of stressors that are unique to the Mexican (or ethnic minority) immigrant experience including, but not limited to family separation, income-to-need adjusted for remittances, and conflict

between parents and their adolescent children arising from differences in cultural orientation and expectation.

The proposed model could be further strengthened by adopting a life course perspective that links interactions across the different spheres of life (family, work, leisure) and across relationships (e.g. family, neighborhood, and work) over time, and that recognizes the role of personal choice or human agency in determining behavior and individual outcomes, and that takes into account the historical trends that have shaped policy decisions and the roles that people are assumed to play in society.

The study uses an etic approach to examine the experience of Mexican immigrant families. However, because so much remains unknown about their experience of cross-national movement, the opportunities and challenges it presents and the manner in which individuals interpret their situations, such investigations could benefit from qualitative research or ethnographic work that uncover the patterns and processes that typify the lives of Mexican-origin families, the neighborhood processes that impact their lives, and the many ways in which immigrant families interpret their situation, manage their daily lives, and make decisions. Similarly, such investigations could also benefit from a better understanding of how immigrant youth feel about themselves, their family and social relations, their place in the world, and their ability to realize their goals and aspirations. This study failed to show that the context of immigration, specifically the social space that families occupy, neighborhood ethnic composition, and neighborhood SES, significantly influence the strength and direction of hypothesized relations. However, the descriptive statistics, the results of the moderating analyses, and the empirical evidence

from other studies suggest that neighborhood SES (or affluence) could alter the strength and direction of hypothesized relations with other samples and with the use of more robust measures.

Policy and Practice Implications

Scholars such as Fuchs (1992) bemoan the fact that immigration policy in the United States is primarily driven by political and economic concerns, without much reference to research. A central challenge for policy and practice involves comparing individual and family needs to societal goals or preferences in order to decide where and how to invest public resources. Doyal and Gough (1991) and Ignatieff (1984) identify four groups of needs that are basic to human survival and development namely, the basic needs of food, water, and adequate housing generally met through financial independence; significant primary relations established through family, friend, and neighborhood ties; security in order to pursue personal and family goals without fear of violence or discrimination; and physical and emotional health to live autonomously and contribute to society. Furthermore, I propose that an overarching societal goal of American society is a healthy economy and some level of national cohesion based on shared goals, however it is clear that Mexican-immigrant families, as a group, disproportionately experience financial hardship and varying levels of exclusion. The study suggests the need for greater public awareness and understanding of the status and conditions of Mexican immigrants, and their connection to U.S. economic interests over time. Policy reports tend to focus on the costs and contributions of Mexican immigrants to local and state economies, and relatively little attention is given to the cost incurred by

individuals and families who leave their countries of origin and come to the United States to work. A first step in this direction could be the development of public education campaigns against the use of discriminatory practices and that illustrate their impact on Mexican immigrant families and children. Immigrants to the United States are often ineligible for a range of public services and are therefore dependent on private solutions to overcome challenges and succeed. This study points to the centrality of family in the lives of first-generation low-income immigrants, and the need for interventions that facilitate self-improvement (e.g. access to high school and higher education), provide avenues for income generation and/better employment. Also suggests the need for interventions that can help alleviate parents' emotional distress and facilitate parental supervision to reduce children's adjustment problems and that support parents in their efforts to structure and participate in the lives of their children.

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